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LETTERS
ON
PURITANISM AND NONCONFORMITY.

The Second Series.

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PURITANISM AND THE AMERICAN

~~THE AMERICAN~~

Make Christ your main pattern, and *next* to him set the patterns of the choicest saints before you for your imitation : keep a fixed eye upon their wise, prudent, humble, holy, and heavenly deportment.—*Rev. Thomas Brooks.*

Protestants bear all due reverence to the saints departed this life, and strive to follow them in their course ; although their example is very remote from being the chiefest incentive or rule unto and in the practice of universal obedience. The example of Christ himself, and the revealed will of God in his word, are their *rule* and guide.—*Dr. John Owen.*

It is a fact sufficiently notorious, that the leading doctrines of the great body of the *Puritans and Nonconformists* were,—the fall and depravity of human nature, the deity and atonement of Christ, justification by faith in his righteousness, and regeneration and sanctification by the agency of the Holy Spirit.—*Rev. Andrew Fuller.*

LETTERS
ON
PURITANISM AND NONCONFORMITY.

BY
SIR JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS, Knt., LL.D. F.S.A.,
AND A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

The Second Series.

LONDON:
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1846.

TO
THE REV. THOMAS RAFFLES, D.D., LL.D.,
A LIVING EXEMPLIFICATION OF THAT GOODNESS WHICH
DISTINGUISHED THE EARLY PURITANS AND
NONCONFORMISTS,

This Volume is inscribed

BY THE AUTHOR,
AS A MEMORIAL OF LONG-CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP.

PREFACE.

IN fulfilling my promise of another series of "Letters," I feel it necessary to say little, especially after the somewhat lengthy Preface to the former volume.

As on that occasion a reference to authorities was commonly avoided, that the pages might be kept unencumbered, the same course has again been pursued.

The same attention has likewise been paid in recording the opinions of eminent men to their most *matured* sentiments; a point often of importance. Philip Henry was not the only one who grew wiser by experience, as well as years. In the discussion, indeed, of some subjects connected with Puritanism and Nonconformity, it is as unfair to

make quotations, without regard to "*time*," as it would be to cite Dr. Chalmers upon "Church Establishments" before, instead of after, he and so many of his brethren abandoned the Erastianism of what was held to be no better than "a house of bondage."

The illustrations have been placed together chiefly as "Notes" at the end; and throughout I have been self-denyingly studious of brevity.

It would have been gratifying to myself, and much to edification, to have introduced extracts from books freely; but since this would have extended the undertaking inordinately, it seemed undesirable to do so; because, if a wish should arise for familiarity with the writings of Puritans and Nonconformists, the means of satisfying it are now abundant.

This will show why extracts have been used sparingly; and why it is that, when they seemed needful, I have so often made them from manuscripts rather than from sources accessible to almost any inquirer.

I may observe as to transcripts, whether from manuscripts, or from volumes little known,—and

the remark applies to allusions,—that there has been not only a strict regard to accuracy, but a concern for the reader's benefit. And he will find, unless I am mistaken, that in the former volume and the present, there is enough to correct erroneous impressions; if not to awaken regard for a large body of Christians, whose piety, and love of the Scriptures, and subjection to their authority; whose patience in affliction; edifying deaths; and precious remains, may be appealed to in proof of eminent *goodness*; and in proof also that "God is in *their* history," no less really than Dr. Merle D'Aubigné has shown He was in that of the "great Reformation."

It is my desire, however, for it to be understood that, notwithstanding a high estimate of Puritans and Nonconformists, I neither under-value nor am blind to the excellences of very many who differed from them.

Nor am I blind either to the faults or inconsistencies of some of the Puritans and Nonconformists themselves. This was, perhaps, sufficiently noticed before. It may, nevertheless, be well again to advert to it; and to remark that,

as the apostolic churches were scandalised by what was contrary to apostolic "doctrine," so it has been in succeeding ages; and that when a work of Reformation has been begun, and "the Spirit poured out," similar events have happened. In the "Commonwealth," when vital religion predominated, were not the faith and patience of the sober-minded tried by the formalism of hypocrites, the enthusiasm of the weak, the intolerance of the stubborn, the projects of the visionary, and the extravagance of such as were both ignorant and perverse?

But there is no fairness in censuring the *body* for such things any more than in concealing the virtues of pious men because of diversity of opinion: or in magnifying defects, so as to throw virtues into the shade: or, like Hume, in confounding fanaticism with religion. The evils alluded to will not hinder the impartial from admiring what is excellent. Such persons, in order to judge righteously, will discriminate; will consider circumstances; will put abuses to the right account; will pause before they censure; and will never let that which is scriptural

and just suffer, even if found associated with what may be fit for reprobation. Will any one "taught of God" think the worse of the "narrow way," or its few travellers, because *reproach** commonly attends it? Or of "pure and undefiled religion," on account of the miscarriages—with which it has nothing to do—of its professors?

The dissimilarity between conscientious obedience to God, and that restlessness which delights in turbulence, will always be sufficiently obvious to preserve the lovers of truth from mistake; and that very love will lead them so to separate a man who transgresses from his profession and his party, as to prevent good being confounded with evil, and a community from being blended with that which belongs only to individuals.

* "Sometimes without any colour at all. Or with very little colour—as when Christ himself was called "a wine-bibber," Matt. xi. 19. We are told that we must *expect* to have our names cast out 'as evil,' Luke vi. 22—represented as designing, self-seeking, proud, opiniative, governed by a spirit of contradiction! If our consciences tell us this is false, we must not quit our profession to prevent it: but pass by 'evil report' as well as 'good,' 2 Cor. vi. 8."—*Rev. Matt. Henry*. Feb. 27, 1708. The Orig. MS.

The author of the "Velvet Cushion" observed that "*indiscriminate* censure of the Puritans would be highly unjust; some of them," indeed, he says, "were not merely among the best Christians, but the finest gentlemen of the day."

An appeal may be made to the most prejudiced—whether it is not disingenuous to fasten wrong-doings upon Puritans and Non-conformists, because some of their number were ill-conducted, as it is to revile Christianity because some "called Christians at the first," were convicted of "offences" and condemned? Or as it is to judge of Christianity by Mrs. H. More's "Phraseologists,"* rather than by the oracles of truth, or the self-knowledge, self-denial, and self-abasement of the spiritually wise?

The difference between suffering as an evil-doer, and suffering as a Christian, was noticed by the apostle Peter. That popular Congregationalist, Thomas Brooks, enlarged upon it in a "General Epistle," prefixed to the second part of his "Golden Key." And—did not Philip

* Moral Sketches. "High profession and negligent practice."

Henry feel it strongly? *He* exclaimed when dying,—“Follow peace and holiness, and let them say what they will.”—“More,” his son, the celebrated commentator, tells us, “he would have said to bear his testimony to the way in which he had walked, but nature was spent, and he had not strength to express it.”

A demonstration of the *goodness* identical with *that way* is my object.

The reader will keep in mind, that *these* Letters, as the former, are intentionally desultory; that, after all, the selection of illustrations is meagre; that no small difficulty was connected with the selection; and that to prevent diversity of opinion, as to the choice of examples, is impossible. When, however, I have left men of renown unnoticed, or mentioned them but cursorily, or no otherwise than by their names, it has been partly for the sake of brevity; partly because they *are* men of renown; and partly, that, by introducing others less known, a greater amount of goodness might be made manifest.

Few persons need be referred, I presume, to Dr. O. Gregory's “Brief Memoir” of the late Rev.

Robert Hall, or to Mr. Morris's "Recollections" of the same wonderful man. But should this not be so, and a desire be felt to see Dissent in union with intellect of loftiest majesty; taste in its most exquisite combinations; and godliness in its divinest forms; attention may be fearlessly drawn to those able and captivating narratives, and the "entire works" which Dr. Gregory edited.

Dr. Parr said truly that Mr. Hall had "the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint." Would the encomium be less true of John Howe, Baxter, Dr. Bates, Samuel Shaw, Jeremiah White, Dr. Watts, Nathaniel Taylor, Dr. Doddridge, Henry Grove, or John Foster?

JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS.

*The Hall, Wem,
May 3, 1846.*

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The *Puritans* devoted their days and nights to hard study; they cherished devotional feelings; and they enjoyed intimate communion with God. The stores of their minds were expended, and the energy of their souls was exerted, to separate the truths of the Gospel from the heresies of the times in which they lived; to resist the encroachments of arbitrary power; to purify the church from secularity and corruption; and to promote the power of religion among the people. They persevered in this course amidst a host of difficulties, and in defiance of the most powerful opposition.—*Rev. B. Brook.*

How great a number of holy persons of *my acquaintance* of exemplary lives could I name that God hath taken to himself! When we describe *their* humility, piety, soundness of judgment, fidelity, peaceableness, concord, secret and open holiness, sobriety, &c., we must speak the same things of all.—*Rev. Richard Baxter.*

The chief of the *Congregational* party are men of great worth, learning, sobriety, and holiness.—*The Conformist's Fourth Plea for the Nonconformists*, p. 27. 4to. 1683.

LETTER I.

The practice of holiness is regular and uniform, wherein the saints resemble one another: yet there is a conspicuous singularity of active or suffering graces in some saints that eminently distinguish them from others, and *these* we should especially regard.—*Dr. Bates.*

The Nonconformists deserved honour, and endured reproach: they were beloved in heaven, and hated on earth: they aimed at extensive usefulness, and endured cruel mockings and gross injustice. We should regard them with all the reverence which is due to saints—with all the sympathy which is due to martyrs—and with all the gratitude that is due to benefactors. By their contemporaries they were treated neither with justice nor mercy; and, therefore, let all succeeding generations exalt them to distinction, and regard them with attachment.—*Rev. John Cockin.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—My former Letters on Puritanism and Nonconformity were to be followed by others on the same subject, but confined in their range to the men themselves: for *men* they were, in understanding and habit, and of “a true, Christian, primitive spirit, of the old stamp, that bore” upon them “the lively image and impression of their great Master.” Before, I felt

it necessary to explain their principles, to show their loyalty, to advocate their learning, and to exhibit the temper and misrepresentations of their enemies. I shall now endeavour more exclusively, though not without observations, a manifestation of the *goodness* which has ever been allied to those principles; and in so doing the principles themselves will not be lost sight of.

If the world has its heroes; if the hierarchies of Rome and England have their saints and martyrs; so, you will find, have the Puritans and Nonconformists; though, very properly, they are not canonized, nor are days observed in their remembrance. There were intellectual giants among *them*, as well, to say the least, as among the "fathers of the English church." And in religious excellence who ever surpassed them? That which they advocated, and that which they pursued, was—*holiness*, in its "greatest strictness and height."

It may not be amiss to remark, notwithstanding what was said before, that the terms Puritanism and Nonconformity are relative—the one conveying the idea of greater purity than something else; the other implying a something to which, as a result, it stands opposed.

In both cases the meaning is the same, but under different circumstances, and at different

times: Puritanism before the 24th of August, 1662,—Nonconformity afterwards. Both maintain the perfection, and stand upon the solid basis of Holy Scripture, and that *alone*: both express genuine Protestantism as opposed to Popery: and both are more or less against whatever would interfere with the purity, simplicity, and spirituality which God requires in his worship.

These principles, like the doctrines of the cross, as restored in the sixteenth century, and then again by Whitefield and Wesley, those “second Reformers of England,” in the eighteenth, existed—notwithstanding many pronounced them new—*from the beginning*. They were exemplified by the apostles of our Lord, and the first Christians: and although suppressed for ages, they influenced, as Dr. Ulman has shown, “Reformers before the Reformation;” they perfumed the valleys of Piedmont; they gained strength by persecution under Queen Elizabeth and the Stuarts; they triumphed at the Revolution; they now flourish; and they are likely to go among “all nations.” “The first age,” said Dr. Cotton Mather, “was the golden one. To return to *that* will make a man a Protestant, and I may add a Puritan.”

I shall not attempt to form a shield for Puritans and Nonconformists, so comprehensive as the one

made for Æneas, on which was engraven *all* the Roman story ; but I shall collect such fragments respecting them and make such allusions to their “remains,” as will set them before you sufficiently at least for admiration ; and show that, in spite of all that we who live in better times can see was wrong, either in their spirit or their actions, their tenets or their excesses, their mistakes in legislation, or even what are called their “gloomy follies,” they were truly men “of whom the world was not worthy”—that, though “dead, they yet speak.”

Among the earliest known martyrs, after the Reformation, to the principles of Puritanism and Nonconformity, and especially those which were more or less congregational, were ELIAS THACKER and JOHN COPPING, who, in June, 1583, were hanged at St. Edmondsbury : both of them ministers of the Gospel ; sound in the doctrinal articles of the Church of England ; and of unblemished lives.

Then followed JOHN GREENWOOD and HENRY BARROWE, men of worth, holy zeal, and courage :

“Not names ignoble, born to be forgot.”

They were educated at Cambridge, and Barrowe was a member of the Honourable Society of Gray’s Inn. Their sufferings were constant :

they endured long imprisonments and many privations : and at length, April 6, 1593, were executed at Tyburn. Such was the witness borne to their unfeigned piety and loyalty, that when the report was made to the queen, she repented of having concurred in their death.

That they also were martyrs to the principles of Nonconformity, and, indeed, of Congregationalism, what ingenuous mind can doubt? Their offence, as their examinations and writings show, was their difference in judgment from the ruling clergy ; in other words, their zeal for purity in Divine worship, and contention for the supreme authority of the Bible ; “ that little book,” which, said Barrowe, “ we willingly receive as judge in all our controversies.” Charges of disaffection to the government were a mere pretext for the use of the law, just as, in the case of Daniel, the three Hebrew youths, the great apostle of the Gentiles, and the Christian confessors of every age. Think upon the English Lollards, Wickliffe’s followers, and the earliest doctrinal Puritans : who have been more denounced than those good men ? Bigoted writers, I mean high churchmen and Romanists, would have you believe that they were dangerous, seditious, and heretical. Not so the Rev. Joseph Milner. That excellent conformist declares, in his fourth volume of the

History of the Church, that "*only* for the Gospel's sake they suffered ; whatever might be the pretences of their enemies."

Mr. Hanbury, in his "Historical Memorials," has rescued some of the opinions published by Greenwood and Barrowe from oblivion, and thereby laid Protestants, not to say Congregationalists, under fresh obligations. Barrowe's "Brief Discovery of the False Church, Ezek. xvi. 44,—'As the mother such the daughter is,'"—would hardly be surpassed by any writer of the present day, either in style or argument. In the preface, however, he disclaimed any further credit for his performance than the Scriptures warranted: but he stickled for the right he had to speak the truth of God plainly and simply, notwithstanding it had long lain hid and buried, and was then generally impugned.

Among the last who suffered death in this righteous cause, was JOHN PENRY, a poor Welshman, educated at Cambridge and Oxford, and, undoubtedly, possessed of great learning as well as piety. Being a Puritan, he wrote several searching "Tractates;" and, such was the iniquity of the times, his afflictions corresponded to his honest zeal.

The examination he underwent while a prisoner, has been preserved; and you learn from it that

the views he held, he would be "bound" to prove out of the written word, and would show to have been maintained by Wickliffe, Brute, Purvey, White, Tindal, Lambert, Barnes, Latimer, and others.

A few days before he was "offered up," he addressed such a "protestation" to the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, as makes it difficult to say which most prevails—the uprightness of the writer, or the dignity and sustaining power of religion. But his doom was fixed. Whitgift, then primate, was the first to sign the warrant for his execution. It was immediately despatched to the sheriff, who, the same day, erected a gallows at St. Thomas Waterings; and, while Penry was at dinner, sent officers to bid him make ready, for that afternoon he must die. Accordingly, he was carried in a cart to the place of execution, not allowed to speak, and hastily "turned off," in the thirty-fourth year of his age. A widow and four young children mourned their irreparable loss. The atrocious deed was perpetrated May 29, 1593, about five o'clock in the afternoon.

LETTER II.

Multitudes of faithful and prudent ministers have been swept into their graves by ejections, banishments, imprisonments, and heart-breaking silencings.—*Rev. J. Flavel.*

He that is a Christian indeed, and follows Christ fully and faithfully, will not, in the day of trial, inquire whether the matter be small or great that is *imposed* on him: but whether it be lawful or unlawful. If it be unlawful, not warranted by the law of God, how small soever it may seem, he counts it an occasion great enough to suffer anything rather than yield to it.—*Rev. D. Clarkson.*

PUBLIC executions having failed, other methods were tried with dissidents. Puritanism was, if possible, to be eradicated. The better, therefore, to accomplish the object, the gallows, after the true Julian policy, was exchanged for the slower sorrows of scornful examinations, articles of indictment, deprivations, suspensions, fines, imprisonments, and exile.

“ As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on,”

this zeal, for a long time, waxed hotter and hotter, destroying in its progress every vestige of

humanity. Even the "famine of the word of the Lord," created by daily havoc among its preachers, does not seem to have produced one pang of remorse.

But the better to see the *goodness* connected with the victims, you should look at a few of them as a sample of the rest. And, surely, they are not the less to be pitied, nor their doings less to be noticed, nor their persecutors less to be condemned, because that which was intended to hinder, turned out, as of old, for the "furtherance of the Gospel."

The Rev. THOMAS CARTWRIGHT was a native of Hertfordshire, and fellow of St. John's, but afterwards of Trinity College, Cambridge. He was chosen Lady Margaret's professor of divinity. His attainments proved his diligence, and you may judge of their extent by the fact, that he allowed himself only five hours' sleep,—that the Earl of Leicester offered him the provostship of Eton College,—that Beza considered him the most learned man "the sun" saw, and referred Queen Elizabeth to him to reply to the Rhemish Testament,—and that it was his writings Hooker was employed to counteract in the celebrated "Ecclesiastical Polity."

Mr. Cartwright's popularity, as a preacher, was such as to make it necessary to take down the

windows when he occupied St. Mary's pulpit, that the multitudes might hear. But being known to be in favour of apostolic institutions rather than those of human origin, he was soon in trouble. Whitgift, as vice-chancellor, removed him from the lecture, and inhibited him from preaching, either within the university, or its jurisdiction.

The good man then went abroad, and was chosen minister to the English merchants at Antwerp, and next at Middleburgh. He returned to England after full five years' absence, but it involved him in controversy with Whitgift himself. The latter, however, had power on his side, being Archbishop of Canterbury; while the former was hunted from place to place, as if unfit to live. But wherever he was, he contended from the pulpit and the press, that the Scriptures were the standard of discipline and government as well as doctrine, and that the church of Christ in all ages ought to be regulated by them.* Nor was it in discipline, and government, and doctrine merely, that he recognised and bowed to their authority; their practical influence was yielded to also; and so entire was his subjection to it, that he would not hear even his adversaries

* See Note A.

spoken against. He taught that it is a Christian's duty to pray for, not to reproach, enemies.

Without following this venerable person through all the windings of his pilgrimage, it may suffice to observe, that as it is easier to silence by law than to answer by scriptural arguments, so, by unceasing persecution, he became familiar with that testing logic. No sooner did he return from a second expatriation, than he was apprehended by Bishop Aylmer, and cast into prison ; but Whitgift, before whom he appeared, struck with his modesty and respectful behaviour, permitted him, upon a promise of being quiet and peaceable,—habits ever congenial to him,—to go at large. For this favour the Earl of Leicester and Mr. Cartwright thanked his grace ; but all their endeavours could not obtain a license to preach. The Earl now, therefore, made him master of the hospital at Warwick, where, being exempt from prelatical jurisdiction, he officiated without a license.

Mr. Cartwright was next summoned to the consistory of the Bishop of Worcester ; where, to the foulest aspersions and rudest insolence, he meekly replied—"I have the word of God for my warrant, and the example of the reformed churches for my guide in what I have done."

Afterwards he endured a long imprisonment,

and the buffetings also of the Star Chamber and High Commission courts : and so thoroughly did he tire the prelates, that at the end of life he had comparative rest, but not from his beloved labours. He rose at three o'clock in the morning, and, although in consequence of hardships and cold prisons, he could scarcely creep into the pulpit, he indulged his delight in religious ordinances, and preached to the last. The Lord's day before his death, he delivered a discourse on Eccl. xii. 7, &c. : "Then shall the dust return to the earth, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." On Tuesday morning following, Dec. 27, 1603, after spending two hours upon his knees in private prayer, he told Mrs. C. of his unutterable comfort and joy; God had given him, he said, a glimpse of heaven. That day he died, aged sixty-eight years. His remains were interred in his own hospital at Warwick : and Mr. Dod, a Puritan, of whom it is hardly possible to think too highly, preached the funeral sermon.

There was one contemporary of Mr. Cartwright, between whom and himself there were some strong points of resemblance. This was the learned HENRY AINSWORTH. Le Long calls him an Independent. He led among the Brownists, and is always spoken of by their antagonist, Bishop Hall, with the utmost respect. That

excellent prelate refers to him as their "doctor, their chief, their rabbi." Like Cartwright, he was harassed by severe persecution, and, for the truth of the Gospel, forced to leave his native country, and live abroad. But he was not idle: and for a time was associated with Mr. Francis Johnson, in a church and congregation at Amsterdam.

Ainsworth's attention, like Cartwright's, was driven to controversy. It never went that way from choice. They both delighted most in biblical studies: in commentaries on select portions of Scripture: in "glosses and annotations." Those of Ainsworth on the five books of Moses, the Psalms, &c., are too well known to need recommendation. They have been specially extolled by many of the learned.

He finished his course about the close of the year 1622, or beginning of 1623, leaving a character not only for eminent piety, and patience in bearing injuries, but for uncommon erudition.

Another undaunted worthy was Mr. JOHN ROBINSON, of Cambridge university. He was beneficed near Yarmouth. But, distressed, like many others, at the oppressions of the ecclesiastical courts, and the numerous Popish relics and superstitions retained in the Church of England, he separated from the Establishment in

1602; and churches more accordant with the New Testament model were organised. He became the pastor, or bishop,* of one of them, and, after enduring for several years bitter persecution, fled to Holland. At Leyden he founded the first Independent church since the Reformation; and there, on the 1st of March, 1625, died, greatly lamented, in the fiftieth year of his age. The magistrates, divinity professors, and many of the citizens, honoured his funeral with their presence.

* This term is obviously not used in a prelatical or diocesan-episcopal sense, but in the New Testament sense; as the apostle Paul used it in Acts xx. 28; and when inscribing an epistle to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,"—a single society or church,—“with the bishops and deacons.” And see Letter II. in the former series.

LETTER III.

I often heard the reverend and holy Mr. Angier say, that in a little time, whoever lived would see that much of the government of Christ would be carried on in particular churches amongst themselves.—*Rev. Oliver Heywood.*

The Congregational church discipline cannot live well where the power of godliness dies: it becomes distasteful for the purity of it. In my apprehension, Scripture, and reason, and antiquity are for it, and it is not far from a glorious resurrection. Famous Mr. Baxter, after thirty or forty years' hard study about the true instituted church discipline, at last not only owned, but also invariably proved, that it is the *Congregational*: so that the further the unprejudiced studies of learned men proceed in this matter, the more generally the Congregational church discipline will be pronounced for.—*Dr. Cotton Mather.*

INTIMATELY connected with Mr. Robinson, mentioned in my last letter, was the Rev. HENRY JACOB. That distinguished individual was born in Kent, in 1563, and educated in St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, where he took his degree. He was beneficed at Cheriton, in his native country, but obliged to quit his living: and persecution drove him to the continent.

About the year 1599 he settled at Middleburgh, collected a church among the English exiles, continued pastor for several years, and having embraced Mr. Robinson's views of Independency, returned, in the year 1616, to London. There he formed a design of raising a separate congregation similar to those in Holland, and communicated his intention to Mr. Dod, Mr. Throgmorton, and some other Puritans, who, seeing no prospect of a reformation of the national church, expressed their approbation. He accordingly called several friends together, and obtained their consent to unite in church fellowship for a purer administration of Divine ordinances. It has been supposed that the foundation of the first Congregational or Independent church in England was so laid. But, whether that were the case or not, the mode of proceeding Mr. Jacob and his friends adopted was as follows: Having observed a day of solemn fasting and prayer for the blessing of God upon their undertaking, each member of the society made a public confession of his faith in Jesus Christ. Then, standing up, they joined hands, and solemnly covenanted, in the presence of Almighty God, to walk together in all God's ways and ordinances according as he had already revealed, or should further make

known to them.* Mr. Jacob, by the suffrage of the brotherhood, was chosen bishop† or pastor, and proper persons were elected also to the office of deacons, with fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands.

In the year 1624 the good man went to Virginia, where he soon afterwards died. All his works bespeak him learned, catholic, and pious.

Another of the early Puritans was Dr. AMES, a divine of great acquirements and distinction ; and, in matters of church order and discipline, an Independent. The county of Norfolk gave him birth in the year 1576, and he was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, under Mr. Perkins. He became a fellow ; and when driven from England by persecution, filled the divinity chair at Leyden for twelve years with universal honour. He intended a removal to New England, whither his family and library went ; but death prevented him. Dr. Mather, noticing the circumstance in his "Magnalia," adds, "Whether he left his fellow upon earth, I know not. Such acuteness of judgment and affectionate zeal as he excelled in, seldom meet in the same person. I have often

* See the Congregational Magazine, vol. ix. p. 681, &c., and 449, &c.

† See ante page 14, note.

thought of Mr. Paul Bayne's farewell words to him when going to Holland. Mr. Bayne, perceiving his extraordinary parts, said, 'Beware of a strong head, and a cold heart. It is rare for scholastical wit to be joined with a warm heart in religion.' " But in him it *was* so. Dr. Ames sometimes said, that he could be willing to walk twelve miles on condition he might have an opportunity to preach a sermon ; and he seldom preached without tears. When he lay on his death-bed, he had such tastes of the first-fruits of glory, as that a learned physician, who was a Papist, wondering, said—"Is the latter end of Protestants like this man's?" The event happened November 14, 1633.

With the same brotherhood, Mr. JEREMIAH BURROUGHS must be classed : and Baxter says, "If all the Independents had been like him ; all the Episcopalians like Archbishop Usher ; and all the Presbyterians like Stephen Marshall, the breaches of the church would soon have been healed."

Mr. Burroughs was of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, but had to quit it for nonconformity. He was likewise deprived of his living ; and, though protected by the Earl of Warwick, with whom, for a while, he lived, was compelled ultimately to leave the kingdom.

At Rotterdam he was chosen teacher to the Congregational church over which Mr. Bridge, a fellow of the same college at Cambridge as Mr. Burroughs, presided. After the commencement of the civil war, prelatical power being set aside, Mr. Burroughs returned to England : not, says Granger, to preach sedition, but peace : for which he earnestly prayed and laboured. And “who in the last age,” asks Flavel, “was ever honoured with more success in his ministry? who ever excelled him in skill to bring down the sublime mysteries of the Gospel to the meanest capacity?”

His popular talents placed him over the congregations of Stepney and Cripplegate, London, then reckoned two of the largest in the kingdom. He preached at Stepney church at seven in the morning, and Mr. Greenhill, known best by his Exposition on part of Ezekiel’s prophecy, at three in the afternoon. One was called the morning, the other the evening, star.

Wood stigmatised them both—for they were among the “Dissenting Brethren” in the Assembly of Divines—as notorious schismatics and Independents.

But to return to Mr. Burroughs. He united with Dr. Goodwin, Philip Nye, W. Bridge, and Sydrach Sympson, in publishing the “Apologetical Narrative,” which is a defence of Independency.

And they were well associated, for they had all been exiles for religion, and, to borrow from their own pen, had "consulted the Scriptures without any prejudice. They considered the word of God as impartially as men of flesh and blood are likely to do in any juncture of time; the place they went to, the condition they were in, and the company they were with, affording no temptation to any bias."

In his "Excellency of a Gracious Spirit," Mr. Burroughs remarks, that the more eminently the spirit of Christ appears in any, the more is the rage of evil men against them; and thus the bitter conduct of his foes may be accounted for. Edwards reproached him violently. Vicars was furious. But he repelled their calumnies with Christian meekness: proved his own innocence: showed that he was no schismatic: and employed the language of kindness and conciliation.

The good man's end was hastened by incessant labours, and grief also for the distractions of the times. He died of consumption, November 14, 1646, in the forty-seventh year of his age; and, if the excellent persons who printed his "Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment" are to be believed, "in a fulness of honour and esteem with the best of men, of saints, yea, the worst of enemies."

Many of Mr. Burroughs' publications were posthumous, but, like those of Mr. Bridge, his fellow-labourer, they all breathe the spirit of the Gospel; and, if not remarkable, any more than their author's portrait, for elegance or the sprightly vigour of Flavel, they are not inferior to that spiritual writer, either in tenderness, or an apt application of Scripture. Mr. Burroughs' main design appears to have been to select such topics, and such words too, as were most likely to convince men of their sin and danger, and of the suitableness of Christ as a Saviour. His style, if less rousing, is quite as plain as that of Richard Alleine, Love, Fenner, or Thomas Watson. Had he written less, he would probably have written better. He wants, as is the case with the generality of the Puritans, concentration, and he is too exclamatory. But criticism is unfair, inasmuch as the bulk of what bears his name, consists of his "Morning Exercises every Lord's day;" and some part only of "Notes taken from his mouth in ordinary and frequent preaching." His "Saints' Treasury," being sundry sermons delivered in London, were secured by a short-hand writer.

Instead of making a list of Mr. Burroughs' books, I will only add, that Mr. Greenhill and Mr. Bridge were among those who introduced to

the world his treatises on "Earthly-mindedness and a Heavenly Conversation;" and they tell the "reader" that though the author had much of the comfort that earth could afford, "he still looked upon all creature contentments with the eyes of a stranger, and in order to the raising up of his soul to a more holy, humble, serviceable, self-denying walk with God."

LETTER IV.

The lives of men are like living books, which a wise man will search into and observe.—*Rev. Thomas Hooker.*

There was the table set altar-wise, and to be called the altar, candles, crucifixes, paintings, images, copes, bowing to the east, *bowing to the altar*, and so many several cringes and genuflexions, that a man unpractised stood in need to entertain both a dancing master and a remembrancer.—*Andrew Marvell.*

IN the present letter I need do little more than enumerate some of the Puritans, because by their writings or biographies, or both, they are better known than many of their contemporaries. But although a few only will be specified, there was a host besides, all worthy of distinction.

To Dr. Sampson, the martyr John Bradford owed his conversion to God, as Baxter did his to Paul Bayne. The famous John Ball was a pattern of contentment and piety. Mr. Blackerby's "Life" by Clark contains one of the most quickening exhibitions of sanctity, zeal, and

humility on record. Dr. Gillies introduced into his "Historical Collections," Mr. Wesley's abstract of it; and Fuller, Sutcliffe, Carey, and Ryland, when they met on the 21st of January, 1788, to found the Baptist Missionary Society, read it together. Then there were the religious and learned Dr. Samuel Bolton, and Robert Bolton; Hugh Broughton; John Cotton; Samuel Crook; Ezekiel Culverwell; John Dod; Daniel and Jeremiah Dyke; Stephen Egerton; Thomas Gataker, junr.; Dr. W. Gouge; Richard Greenham; Dr. Robert Harris; Arthur Hildersham; Samuel Hieron; Dr. Hill; Thomas Hooker; William Perkins; Dr. Preston; John Rogers; Richard Rogers; Henry Scudder; Obadiah Sedgwick; Thomas Sheppard; Dr. Sibbs; Henry Smith; Dr. Stoughton; W. Strong; Dr. Thomas Taylor; Dr. Tuckney; Dr. Twisse; Richard Vines; W. Whateley; Jeremiah Whitaker; and John Wilson, who went to Boston.

These were all educated at Oxford or Cambridge, and were famous in their generation, though grievously harassed and punished for nonconformity. Some of them got away to America; others continued in their native land, and endured "hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Before passing on to what in strictness is the

era of Nonconformity, it may be as well to touch upon the diversity which existed among the Puritans. Some of them, like Jacob and Burroughs, were Independents ; others, and their number was large, were Presbyterians ; the remaining class were "conformable:" that is, though averse to many things (still existing, and now the strongholds of Puseyism) which they thought assimilated the Church of England to that of Rome, and were called "weeds of Popery," managed to silence their scruples rather than lose their preferments ; and when harassed by Laud's interference, submitted to what they disliked rather than not preach. Both the largest parties, however—the Presbyterians and conformable—were naturally enough inclined to ecclesiastical establishments, as well as to uniformity in religion, and that by compulsion, if not otherwise obtainable : both, as a matter of course, looked unfavourably upon Independency. This explains the conduct of "Master" Ball, in his opposition to Canne ; and the dislike of such men as Hildersham, Herring, and Dr. Robert Harris to the "Separatists ;" and their fear, also, of separation. It is thus, too, that, while in connexion with Presbyterian *and* Congregational Puritanism, (the former objecting chiefly to forms and ceremonies and their imposition,) you find sufferings,

silencing, and expatriation ; those evils were avoided by the acquiescent, though Puritans. Such not only retained their pulpits, and escaped prelatical violence, but when the tide of affairs turned, turned with it.

Some of these, undoubtedly, were good men, and doctrinally sound ; though seemingly indifferent to truth, if not time-serving, as well as timid. The Rev. Samuel Garbet was of this class ; and as he is only known by Baxter's short notice, I will mention some particulars of him from an unpublished manuscript in my possession. They will throw light upon an important section of Puritanism, at which, the matter being collateral to my object, I need only glance.

Mr. Garbet, born about the year 1575, in the neighbourhood of Ludlow, was of Baliol College, Oxford. He there took his Master's degree, was made a fellow, and settled as a tutor.

In 1609 Sir Francis Newport, the grandfather of the first Earl of Bradford, prevailed upon him to accept the living of Wroxeter, near Shrewsbury ; and, the see of Lichfield and Coventry being vacant, he was inducted by Archbishop Bancroft on the 5th of August that year. He married twice ; the first time, Mary Detton, "a religious woman of good sense and considerable fortune." The second time, Joyce Hatton.

He had been but a few years at Wroxeter

before his repose was disturbed by "great trouble of mind, occasioned by scruples of conscience, which he could not satisfy." In his distress he went to London, and consulted the author of the "Christian Warfare." The visit was successful. Mr. Downname "resolved his doubts, removed his fears, and dispelled the religious gloom with which his mind had been overcast."

Subsequently, his difficulties, which seem frequently to have returned, took another direction. He was puzzled as to the conduct he should observe towards his patron, who had required him to go to the "chapel" at Eyton, near Wellington, which he had refused to do; and also as to tithes, whether they were of Divine right or not. He again applied to Mr. Downname, who advised him "to endeavour as much as he could to please his patron, without displeasing God;" and intimated his opinion, that the Divine right of tithes was "rather probable than demonstrative." The letter containing those replies bears date, July 14, 1614, and a copy of it is now before me; but it is tiresomely long.

In another communication afterwards, Mr. Downname expresses himself "heartily glad that the Lord had given" his friend "rest after his many conflicts;" and advised him "to use the respite as a time of breathing and preparation against the next encounter."

The only thing that gives any lustre to Mr. Garbet's name, occurred in the year 1633, and the manuscript thus records it. He "read logic for about a month to Mr. Richard Baxter, who was then about eighteen years old, and taught school at Wroxeter for Mr. Owen, at that time sick of a consumption. He provoked him to a closer course of study, and by his own arguments, and those of the best authors, (for he furnished him with their books on this subject,) endeavoured to persuade him to conformity to the church of England. This Mr. Baxter acknowledges in his own life, where he gives Mr. Garbet the character of a faithful, learned, and peaceable divine. And to express his gratitude for the favours received from him, whenever he published any book during the life of Mr. Garbet, (and he published many,) he always sent one bound to him as a present."

Our accommodating vicar was once more placed in great perplexity by Archbishop Laud enjoining—it was in the year 1637—"all persons to bow towards the altar at their entrance into the church." Mr. Garbet, the manuscript proceeds, again repaired for counsel to Mr. Downname, whose answer was in these words—"Much is to be done to gain liberty in these declining times to preach the Gospel, so that what we do

be not simply unlawful. The apostles themselves complied much with the people in their time in matters ceremonial, though things of a worse nature than ours, that they might not give offence to Jews nor Gentiles, nor thereby hinder the propagation of the Gospel. Paul especially, who most sharply inveighed against legal ceremonies, when he preached to the Gentiles, as being shadows vanished, the substance being exhibited, yet submitted to some of them, when he was amongst the Jews, that he might not give them offence, nor hinder them from embracing the doctrine of the Christian religion. But yet we know that we may not do anything unlawful or sinful for the achieving of the greatest good, neither doth God need our halting to preserve his truth in uprightness. And if this *required* appear unto us of this nature, then farewell all pretences and disputes. Now there are two things to be considered—the rule by which we are tied to obedience; and the nature of the thing itself. For the former we have no law of God, no law of the land, no canon of the church, but only the will and command of our ordinary; and if he may thus enforce this, what may he not do by the same rule? Nay, what is he not likely to do, seeing he presseth *these* upon us with so much danger to himself, if the law had its due course? For the thing

itself—this bowing—is either to God himself, or the sacred things, as we may call them, before which we bow. If it be to God by the mediation of a creature, I see not how it may be excused of a breach of the second commandment, which condemneth will-worship, and the adoring of God under any similitude or representation. Besides, it is a limiting of God's presence unto one thing or place more than another. If to the things themselves, then it must be either adoration, or veneration, as you call it. If adoration, it is then plain idolatry, seeing Divine honour due only to God, is given to the creature; as to veneration, I cannot see anything but a name to make the difference. Seeing though there be a civil veneration which differeth enough from Divine worship, yet I can see but a small difference between veneration and adoration about things religious and Divine. And though we may and ought to have a reverent estimation of these holy things in our hearts, yet there is no need of expressing it by corporal adoration, as the bowing the body before them. Neither do I see any difference between religious bowing and kneeling; they are only majus and minus of the same kind. And, methinks, there is a great difference between kneeling at the sacrament and bowing at the table or altar, as now they would have it, seeing that is a part

of Divine worship in itself, and also joined with prayer and thanksgiving, and we are to worship God with our bodies, as well as with our souls. But *this* bowing is an action singled from all parts of Divine service, and merely devised and required of man, and that without any ground or warrant, Divine or human. My much business will not allow me further to enlarge myself, neither is it safe for me to have done thus much, but that I know to whom I do it, who will be secret and not discover anything that may endanger me."

It is not surprising that a mind inclined to conformity merely by such nice casuistry; by quieting, perhaps, rather than satisfying, conscience, should come to prefer the Directory to the Common Prayer Book, especially when by doing so a "living" could be kept. For "it is evident," says the manuscript, (which was written by a clerical descendant, the Rev. Samuel Garbet, of Wem,) that Mr. Garbet *did* comply "with the parliament, whatever good wishes he had for the king." And, it is added, with cool approbation, "his compliance exempted him from plundering, sequestration, and ejectionment."

Thenceforward the course of this reverend "conformable," appears to have been tranquil, and undisturbed by "scruples;" and except that, in June, 1657, he received Baxter's book against

Popery, and was then able, "notwithstanding his great age," to write "with an even and steady hand," nothing more is known of him.

In the year 1659, the author of the manuscript presumes Mr. Garbet died, "about eighty-four years old. He was, certainly, a very sober and pious man; a learned and laborious minister; a plain dealer with persons of the greatest quality in his parish, thinking he was answerable for their faults if he did not admonish them to forsake them. We that live in a looser age are apt to think his zeal transported him too far, when by letter he rebuked Mrs. Beatrix Newport, for following a new fashion, in having two curled locks of hair hanging down on each side her neck. But the Scripture being express against such ornaments, he could not dispense with himself in not taking notice of them."

LETTER V.

Of what moment soever controversies be, if the things that are taken to be errors are *imposed* as a condition of communion, a Christian cannot join himself with them.—*Dr. Manton.*

The Nonconformists were men that would have been highly esteemed and honoured in the primitive church, for which they who bore so hard upon them profess so great a veneration. They were men of great faith and trust in God, and, by their integrity, silenced many that apprehended religion a fancy. They rejoiced in the usefulness of their brethren while they themselves were discountenanced. They prayed heartily for their civil governors, and all in authority, while treated as seditious persons, and unworthy of any favour. They were owned of God in all their troubles, carried through a great many difficulties, gained upon many of their enemies by their patience and quietness, and, at last, were taken under protection of the government.—*Dr. Calamy's Baxter's Life abridged.*

THE Act, which it has been remarked, settled *uniformity* by so many breaches and rendings of ministers and people as the Protestant world never saw—passed August 24, 1662; so that, thenceforward, we have to deal with *Nonconformists*: those men whom Locke pronounced “worthy, learned, pious, and orthodox divines;” and

whom the poet Wordsworth has respectfully memorialised in his "Ecclesiastical Sonnets." Many of their "Farewell Sermons" were published, but not by the authors. I have those of Mr. Newcomen in his own handwriting. Such as are in print, though wretchedly imperfect, proclaim the worth of the men ; their heavenly-mindedness and patience ; their ministerial endowments ; their love to souls ; their loyalty, charity,* and peaceableness ; and their unbending integrity. They were too honest to avow "assent and consent" to what few could see before the ejection ; and which, when they did see, they did not believe.

The "farewell" sermons delivered by Dr. Bates were heard by Samuel Pepys, Esq., and, in his "Memoirs and Correspondence," you have a full report. The narrative is interesting, but too long for my purpose. It shows, however, the deserved popularity of the preacher, and the interest the public took in his services at St. Dunstan's for the *last* time ; it is confirmatory, also, of his uprightness, his vast abilities, peaceful temper, and great prudence. To narrate, indeed,

* That blessed, but much persecuted, man of God, the Rev. Thomas Jollie, ejected from Althome, in Lancashire, used to say, with his usual seriousness,—“ Oh, if our adversaries had a casement in our breasts, they might see loyalty *and* love there !” —Funeral Sermon by his son, the Rev. Timothy Jollie, p. 12, Oct. 1704.

that which is *good* respecting these honoured men and their predecessors and successors would be to condense a library. I will, therefore, only allude to the Life of Thomas Cartwright, by B. Brook; the Lives of Philip Henry and Matthew Henry; of Dr. John Owen and Baxter, by Mr. Orme; J. Angier and N. Heywood, by Oliver Heywood; Owen Stockton, by Mr. Fairfax; Dr. Staunton, by Richard Mayo; John Hieron, of Breadsall, by Robert Porter; Dr. Doddridge, by Job Orton; Oliver Heywood, by Mr. Slate; John Howe, by Professor Rogers; George Trosse, by Mr. Gilling; Dr. Watts, by Mr. Milner; and John Bunyan, by Mr. Philip.

The library at Red Cross-street, in London, founded by Dr. Daniel Williams, contains a large collection of books, MSS., and portraits both of Puritans and Nonconformists. There is one work by an ejected divine deposited there, which, notwithstanding Dr. Calamy's use of it in his "Account," may be said never yet to have seen the light. I refer to three folio volumes in MS. entitled "*Icones Sacræ Anglicanæ, or the Lives and Deaths of several eminent English Divines, &c., performed by John Quick,* Minister of the Gospel.*" In the third of those volumes are memoirs of Mr. Hieron, of Modbury; Mr. Samuel Crompton, pastor of Launceston; Mr. George

* See Note B.

Gefferys, minister of Kingsbridge, Devon; Mr. John Drake, pastor of the English church at Middleburgh; Mr. Alexander Grosse, minister of Ashburton, in Devon; Mr. Nicolas Leverton, minister of St. Tudy, in Cornwall; Mr. Nathaniel Ball, minister of Barley, in Hertfordshire; Mr. John Rowe, pastor of a church in London, son of Mr. Rowe, of Crediton; Mr. William Jenkins, pastor of Christchurch, London; and Mr. John Flavel, minister of Dartmouth, in Devon.

By the Act of Uniformity, more than two thousand divines, like-minded with those above enumerated, sacrificed their incomes, their churches, and their homes, for conscience' sake; to maintain their spiritual independence; to serve *Him* who is Head over all things to his church. Let one of them now have your attention.

I mean ISAAC AMBROSE, whom the statute found at Garstang in Lancashire: a man of such substantial value, both as a minister and a Christian, as to make the want of a full memoir of him a matter of regret.

There are, it is true, *some* notices of him in his writings, but they are few and scattered. They give a clue, however, to his pursuits; they show, also, that his health was delicate, and his frame weak. You, consequently, see how ill-suited he was to those frequent afflictions, which he shared

in common with his nonconforming brethren ; and which often attached themselves to their reputation, as well as their liberty. An appendix to " The Life of Faith," in his " Media," tells us, with characteristic diffidence, the " manner " of the operation of that grace, in oppositions against truth and goodness, and more particularly against our good name,* whereby an unworthy servant of Christ sometimes found " abundance of spiritual comfort." You catch another glimpse of Mr. Ambrose in his sermon at the funeral of Lady Mary Hoghton. Alluding, in evident contrast to her ladyship, to some he had seen " most confident in their sickness of salvation," he adds, " though I dare not censure" such, " being unacquainted with their grounds, yet I ingenuously acknowledge that I like dearly a humble, trembling,† self-condemning frame. Sure I am that they who are vilest in their own eyes, are persons in whom God most delighteth."

But in his " Media," which was dedicated to the Lady Mary Vere, you see him most to the life. One section contains his " daily register," modestly alleged to be that " of a weak, unworthy servant of Christ," for part of the year 1641 ; and as it is a rare specimen of autobiography, I will transcribe two short extracts.

* See Note C.

† See Note D.

“ May 3. I retired to a silent and solitary place, to practise, especially, the secret duties of a Christian. My ground is that of Canticles ii. 11, 12. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, &c. The Bridegroom of our souls, said Bernard, is bashful, and more frequently visits his bride in the solitary places.”

“ May 14. In a pleasant wood and sweet walks in it, the Lord moved and enabled me to begin the exercise of secret duties : and after the Prolegomena, or duties in general, I fell on that duty of watchfulness.”

How long he continued in this retirement does not appear, but he gives you entries including 31st of May. By these you become acquainted with his employments day by day ; his examination of his evidences for heaven, and his meditations on the love of Christ and eternity. You see how he exercised faith, and abounded in prayer ; how he read the word of God ; practised self-denial ; and sought the improvement of those sufferings into which as a Christian he was “ cast.”

In the same book you become further familiarised with him by means of a chapter of “ Common-places,” observed in his private study of the Scriptures.

But—I pass on to his “ Ultima,” a work which he inscribed to the Right Honourable William,

Earl of Bedford, Lord Russel, Baron of Thornehaugh. For delicacy of personal allusions, as well as a specimen of gratitude and true politeness, that dedication is worth copying. A picture is furnished by it, of many a Nonconformist, besides Mr. Ambrose—and it is an instance, too, of the love which God put into the hearts of several of the mighty and noble, for the benefit of his needy servants. He who commanded ravens to feed Elisha, when hid by the brook Cherith, often supplied the persecuted Puritans and Nonconformists in a way that rewards observation. But judge for yourself.

“ MY MUCH HONOURED LORD,

“ Although all earthly accommodations are common mercies belonging both unto the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, Matt. v. 45; yet, by virtue of the covenant of grace being the accomplishments of Gospel promises through Christ, they are not common, but peculiar to the people of God. For mine own part, however, the Lord hath seen cause to give me but a poor pittance of these outward things: yet in the income thereof many times, I have observed so much of his peculiar providence, that thereby they have been very much sweetened, and my heart hath been raised to admire his grace. Amongst the

many gracious experiences which my God hath given unto his unworthy servant, this must not be forgotten, viz., that when of late under a hard dispensation, (which I judge not meet to mention, wherein I suffered with inward peace conscientiously,) all streams of wonted supplies being stopped, the waters for the relief of myself and my family did run low, I went to bed with some staggering and doubtings of the fountain letting out of itself for our refreshing; but ere I did awake in the morning, a letter was brought unto my house, and after to my bed, where, so soon as I could open mine eyes, I opened the letter, (signed by a choice friend, a precious minister of Christ, Mr. Symeon Ash,) which reported some unexpected breakings out of God's goodness for my comfort. These are some of his lines:—
'Your God, who hath given you a heart thankfully to record your experiences of his goodness, doth renew experiences for your encouragement. Now I shall report one which will raise up your spirit towards the God of your mercies,' &c. My lord, I shall repeat no more of his relation, neither will I particularise your seasonable and liberal contribution; the time of divulging such matters to the world will be at the world's end, when Christ himself will both speak and recompense them.

Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36. My intention in this narration is chiefly to publish how infinitely I am bound to serve my God, and how good a God I serve. This passage of Divine providence doth cause me to mind the words of our Saviour, when he sent his disciples out to preach the Gospel. 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,' Matt. x. 9; 'and salute no man by the way.' Luke x. 4, (q.d.) Stand not upon officious compliments to get friends, go you about my work, and I will provide for you. And to show his faithfulness in keeping promise, he asketh them before his leaving the world, 'When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.' Luke xxii. 35. This is Dr. Preston's comment upon the text: 'If a man be a minister of Christ, let him not think with himself how to provide best for himself, but how he may do most good. Let him take no care for preferment. Let us prefer Christ, and he will prefer us.

"I know it is a hard matter (as one saith well) to trust God for bread and water; and a Christian will find it more difficult (if put to it through want of bread,) to rely upon God's feeding promises, than upon his promises for eternal life. But as this is a ground of deep humiliation unto all believers,

so it is a matter of greatest shame for ministers to distrust their God. What though the unworthy world doth malign them, and seek to deprive them of their due maintenance? Let them know that when the greedy mouth of sacrilege hath swallowed down all, then one morsel of God's provision (especially if it come unexpectedly, upon prayers, when wants are most,) will be more sweet to a spiritual relish than all former full enjoyments were. Your lordship will pardon this digression, because the remembrance of your noble favour hath occasioned it. My lord, that good acceptance which my three printed treatises have found, doth encourage another edition; and, whereas the two first had epistles dedicatory prefixed formerly, I now humbly presume, as a testimony of my gratitude, to present the last unto public use under your honour's patronage.

“These *last things* were the studies of my younger times; if they had not been made public already, I should have placed them in another method; but now I shall not alter them. They suggest matter for every Christian's daily meditation; and if the heart be serious, they will be found many ways profitable. Thereby the secure conscience may be awakened; repentance in godly sorrow, holy shame, hatred of sin, with self-detestation, will be quickened; bowels of compassion to-

wards impenitent offenders will be kindled; and love to the Lord Jesus will be enlarged, when the soul looketh upon him, by whom alone, and by whose sore sufferings and obedience, it is not only delivered from the guilt of sin, the sting of death, the terror of the last judgment, and the unexpressible everlasting torments of hell; but, also, admitted into beatifical communion with God in glory.

“My lord, when I waited on your honour at Woburn, I rejoiced to observe the good order in your lordship’s family, of morning and evening prayer, and my heart was cheered with the acquaintance of those precious knowing Christian servants who attend you.

“Go on, noble lord, vigorously in the service of the Almighty; maintain his honour in all holy exercises, secret, private, and public. Cherish and countenance such who fear the Lord. Be confident that those who make conscience to serve God, will serve you best. There was one speech of your lordship’s which in a special manner sticks with me, viz., that you accounted the prayers of God’s ministers and people, as the best walls about your house. My Lord, I verily believe that you and yours are in the hearts of many such: and as for myself, if I have any interest in the God of heaven, I acknowledge

that many obligations lie upon me, to improve it daily for your good lordship, your virtuous lady, and hopeful posterity.

“ My Lord,

“ I am your honour’s faithful,

“ though very unworthy servant,

“ ISAAC AMBROSE.

“ Preston, Oct. 12, 1653.”

Is it not pleasant to gather up such fragments ? Is it not one way of so observing Divine dispensations as to “ understand the *loving-kindness* of the Lord ?” Besides, in such passages as these you perceive an undesigned but graphic portraiture of the author himself. His “ effigies ” was, indeed, a frontispiece to the folio edition of his works. But you look in vain for Isaac Ambrose *there*,—you can only see him by reading his “ Looking unto Jesus ;” his “ Prima, Media, and Ultima, the first, middle, and last things,” &c. &c.

And, in his own day, these were books extensively read. Some of them went quickly through several editions. When Philip Henry wished to marry Miss Matthews, it appears from his manuscript diary, 15th February, 1658, that he presented her with the Prima, &c. In Mr. Shower’s Funeral Discourse, too, for Mrs. Doolittle, the wife of Matthew Henry’s tutor, *her* attachment

to Ambrose's practical writings is specially noticed; and the great impression they made upon her mind. Nor need this be wondered at. There was more point in his writings than in those of many of his contemporaries; less that was prolix and dry; more racy observations; better similes; and weightier apothegms. His great object in his "Looking unto Jesus," is to lead men to "ponder," I use his own language, "and muse, and meditate, and consider of" *Christ*. Having enlarged upon the first promise, Gen. iii. 15, he says, "I have held you awhile" upon it, "the rather because of the darkness* of it, and the much sweetness that is contained in it. It is full of Gospel truths; strike but the flint, and there will fly out these glorious sparkles."

The latter part of Mr. Ambrose's days were spent at Preston, where he freely talked with, and gave good counsel to, his former hearers. Oliver Heywood says, his widow told him of his solemn farewell to his daughter, and some other friends; and he mentions, that on the day of Mr. Ambrose's death several persons visited him from Garstang. With them he discoursed piously and cheerfully, and told them he was ready whenever his Lord should call; that having the night before sent his book on "Angels" to the press, he had

* See Note E.

finished his work. Having accompanied them to their horses, he shut himself in his parlour for meditation ; but being thought to stay long, when the door was opened he was found expiring. The event happened in the year 1664 or 1665, when he was seventy-two years of age.

LETTER VI.

Such narratives as this do shame and wipe away the calumnies which ignorant men drivel, and malicious men do foam out against the excellent of the earth. They do convincingly prove what many will not think, that there are really very illustrious gifts and graces where no such things are seen as copes and mitres.—*Rev. Daniel Burgess.*

The severe denunciations which Jesus uttered against the Pharisees, for “teaching as doctrine the commandments of men,” discharging all his thunders on the intrusion of human authority into the worship of God, and on the sanctimonious hypocrisy which naturally ensued, indicated clearly the *spiritual* nature of the church which he designed. He found the world in the church, but he determined to reverse their relative position, to construct and perpetuate his new society as a church in the world.—*Dr. John Harris.*

I AM loth to omit outlines of other ancient Nonconformists. But, besides the want of space, the parties I have in view were so renowned for the goodness I wish to display, as to make it unnecessary. The eye turns at once to Thomas Cole, the tutor of John Locke ; to the judicious Caryl, the wonderful Howe, the devout Shaw, the astonishing Baxter, the experimental Owen, the

polished Bates, the sensible Manton, the thoughtful Charnock, the amiable Bridge, the heavenly Philip Henry, the indefatigable Oliver Heywood, the venerable Angier, the tender Flavel, the excellent Clarkson, the intellectual Truman, the unrivalled Bunyan, and the solid and instructive Samuel Cradock.

Connected with them was another class who, though not ejected by the Act of Uniformity, were affected by it: ministers who were for the most part privately educated by those who had graduated at either Oxford or Cambridge; and whose worth and attainments would have rendered them ornaments to those seats of learning. Dr. Calamy, in the second volume of his "Account," has mentioned several of them; but instead of transcribing their names, I will only observe, that, at least, those of Matthew Henry, William Long, Timothy Jollie, and Matthew Clarke, may be added to the list.

Later times show a grand galaxy of successors: men who caught the mantle of Puritanism, and who, though still further removed, and debarred from a university education, did well, like Bishop Warburton, one of the greatest prodigies of the Church of England, without it. I might instance Samuel Pomfret, John Hill, John ~~Bishop~~, B. Bennett, Richard Darracott, B. Fawcett, Dr.

W. H. H.

Guyse, Dr. Grosvenor, John Barker, Samuel Hayward, Dr. Jennings, Jeremiah Jones, Job Orton, Dr. Ridgley, Simon Reader, and Dr. Wright. Nor must you overlook the Reverends Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, Thomas Halyburton, Thomas Boston, and John Brown, of Had-dington. Their resemblance to the Puritans was greater, in some respects, than that of the divines last mentioned.

But where can you look for better, holier names than Watts, and that "most primitive saint"—so Alexander Knox calls him—Doddridge? Whose works "praise them" more? Or, in connexion with whom can your thoughts associate more goodness, or more extended and lasting usefulness?

Dr. Doddridge had one friend besides Dr. Samuel Clark, to whom he was unspeakably indebted, and whom he delighted to honour. That was the Rev. DAVID SOME, of Market Har-borough, who died on the 29th of May, 1737, in his fifty-seventh year. Little remains to make us acquainted with him, but what does remain has been collected in the eighth volume of the Congregational Magazine; and confirms Job Orton's testimony to his "un-common piety, zeal, prudence, and integrity." Dr. Doddridge describes him as a "great man of

God," and one of the brightest ornaments of the Gospel and the ministry that the age had produced. His exit was cheerful and serene. "If any ask," said he, "how David Some died, let him be answered, that he sought and found mercy." Unhappily his "fatal modesty" led him to consign his manuscripts to the flames, but he made public two sermons, which will ever associate him with the best Dissenters. The one was "on the method to be taken by ministers for revival of religion;" the other was "occasioned by the death of the Rev. Thomas Saunders, of Kettering."

His account of Mr. Saunders is so full of instruction, and presents, probably, such a facsimile of Mr. Some himself, and of his brethren generally, as to lead me to present it very much at large; and the rather because the sermon is scarce.

In his younger years, Mr. SAUNDERS "was much addicted to those amusements and diversions in which too many, in the present age, lavish away their precious time, while their best and most valuable interests are neglected. But it pleased God, who designed him for eminent service, to 'call' him 'by his grace,' and 'to reveal his Son in him,' which effectually reclaimed him from the follies of youth, and led him afterwards frequently to drop a tear over

them, praying they might 'be remembered no more.' As soon as he had received the grace of God, it was his great concern to watch against everything which might obstruct his progress in religion, and to use all proper means to promote and strengthen the Christian temper in all its branches. In order hereunto, he narrowly inspected the workings of his own mind, and strictly observed the manner of his conversation. A few days before his death, he put into my hands several little volumes, under obligations never to expose them to the view of any person living; which I hope I shall not violate by a few observations upon them. These papers contain a journal of his life from the time of his conversion until he was so disabled by weakness, that he could carry the account no further. He seldom missed a day, for several years, unless interrupted by sickness, or some extraordinary occurrence, without entering some useful and profitable remarks. In these memoirs we have an account of the deep impressions made upon his mind by the gracious regards of God, in seeking him out when he was a lost sheep, and in bringing him under the special care of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Here we find him admiring the grace of God in forming Christ in his heart, and in carrying on that good work which he had

begun. From these notes I learn he was very severe in examining into the disorders of his mind, and the defects of his conversation, and very desirous that they might be rectified : for which purpose he frequently set apart time to seek the Lord in secret, to engage his assistance in mortifying sin, and to obtain those communications of grace and strength which would enable him to be 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Hence also, I collect, that he was 'working out' his 'own salvation with fear and trembling,' and that he had other affairs in his hands in his retirements, besides the framing of discourses for the entertainment of his people in public. It also appears, that he was particularly exact in the review of his religious hours, and in reflecting on the frame of his spirit in solemn acts of worship ; that he might give glory to God when it was comfortable, and be suitably affected when it was otherwise. In a word, from an intimate acquaintance with him, I had a great deal of reason to conclude that he was a very good Christian ; but I must own, I never saw so much of his great attainments in religion, as appears by the amiable portraiture of his inward man in several parts of this diary.

"It was a strong desire to do good to the souls of men, by 'teaching transgressors' the ways of

God, 'that sinners might be converted to him,' which inclined him to devote himself to the work of the ministry. He found so much real satisfaction in religion, that he was willing others might taste its pleasures; and he saw so much danger in a course of sin, that he thought he could not do a kinder office than to warn men of it, that they might escape the pollution and condemnation to which it would expose them. He was not so early in his preparation for this holy employment as some others; but with the blessing of God on his great industry and indefatigable endeavours, he soon came forth qualified with those endowments which are of the greatest importance to render ministers useful to the church of Christ.

"He had a great gift in prayer, and could express himself very copiously and pertinently in that sacred exercise, especially on particular occasions. His preaching was plain, scriptural, and experimental, in the good *old Puritanical strain*. He did not affect the enticing words of man's wisdom, which please the fancy; neither was he nicely curious in the form of his discourses; but it was his endeavour to touch the conscience, and impress the heart. He insisted largely on the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, especially on the atonement of Christ and the sanctifying influences of

the Spirit. He looked upon these as the two pillars of the New Testament temple, without which the building would soon fall to the ground. These were his favourite subjects, his delightful topics, which triumphed in his sermons, and diffused themselves through all his performances. He never failed to introduce them whenever the argument in hand led to them ; and sometimes, like holy Paul, with whose writings he was so much delighted and edified, he did not scruple a digression which might exalt the name and grace of a Redeemer, and endear him to himself and to his hearers. He was fully persuaded that these were the essential parts of the Gospel scheme, that they were clearly revealed in the holy Scriptures, and that they could not be dropped without giving up Christianity. And what he had felt of the importance of them to himself, was one great reason of his inviolable attachment to them. In his last sickness he declared to several of his particular friends, that he had considered some modern sentiments, in the views of an approaching dissolution, and that awful account which he was soon to give of himself unto 'God the judge of all,' but durst not venture his soul upon what was advanced by them ; and that nothing would afford him any relief in the circumstances he was then in, but the righteousness of Christ to give him a

title to heaven, and the grace and spirit of the Redeemer to make him 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' Here he fixed as on a sure foundation, which he knew could never deceive him. These doctrines he preached as 'doctrines according to godliness,' and improved them to promote purity of heart and holiness of life in the disciples of Jesus. He governed himself very much by this maxim, always to preach the grace of the Gospel practically, and the duties of it evangelically; and I heartily wish that such a maxim may be as prevalent as it is reasonable, and would be useful to ministers and people.

"He was diligent in his work, and 'in labours more abundant.' Besides the care of his own congregation, which was very large, he frequently visited his friends abroad, preached several lectures, and was ready to lay hold on every opportunity to do good; and God wonderfully owned and blessed his labours. There were many 'added to the church' under his immediate care, and a promising harvest appeared to be springing up there, even when God laid him aside, and called him to receive his reward.

"He was a person of great moderation, and behaved with much decency and candour towards those who differed from him. He claimed the liberty of judging for himself in matters of religion,

and he as readily granted the same to others; which did not proceed from a coldness and indifference towards that which appeared to him to be 'the faith once delivered to the saints;' but from an earnest desire to secure and propagate it. It was his fixed and settled judgment, that the mind of man could not be *forced*; that things must be received in the light in which they appear to the understanding; that heat and passion eclipse the glory of Gospel truths; and that severe censures, given out by fallible and uninspired men, would prejudice persons against them. He was fully persuaded that the faith of Christians could not 'stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God;' and that all the methods, which carried in them more of human authority than of Scripture argument, would, in the event, be ineffectual for its preservation, and prejudicial to its interests. He often took notice how unsuccessful and mischievous they had been in former times; and he feared they would be much more in the present age, in which men are grown so very tenacious of their liberty, that the least appearance of imposition inflames their passions, and may lead them, perhaps, to carry both their resentments and their suspicions to an extravagant height. He often lamented the disservice which is done to the cause of truth, by the intemperate zeal of some who,

he apprehended, designed very well, and wished that cooler measures had been taken in all the unhappy disputes which have arisen amongst Christians. Thus, he did not only commend charity, but exercised it ; and that excellent grace appeared in his whole conduct.

“ He knew the world, and had studied men as well as things ; he entered far into the intentions and inclinations of those with whom he conversed, and, by a singular dexterity, often turned them to the best purposes. He had a great command of his temper, and could yield without a mean and servile compliance with what was dishonourable ; and steadily maintain his ground, without the least appearance of arrogance and severity, as he saw occasion either for the one or the other. This acquaintance with human nature was very serviceable to him in his public labours. His reasoning was frequently built upon facts, and his instructions and exhortations were founded on things known and understood by all, which therefore carried their own evidence to the hearers.

“ He was obliging in his behaviour towards all men, and cultivated a friendly correspondence with those of the established church. The foundation of this laudable practice was laid here, many years since, by one of his predecessors, that

great man of God, the Rev. Mr. John Maidwell, and it was much improved by Mr. Saunders. I cannot here omit mentioning the candid return it met with from many of the principal inhabitants of this town: their respectful behaviour towards him in his health, their kind offices in his sickness, and their real sorrow at his death, will not soon be forgotten.

“As a friend he was generous and kind, watchful of all opportunities to serve those to whom he stood engaged under that character. He carried about with him a constant and affectionate concern for them, which showed itself in a readiness, on all occasions, to maintain their character, and promote their usefulness; and, when they needed his assistance, he would enter thoroughly into their case, and, without solicitation or importunity, seek and promote their real advantage. His great acquaintance and influence furnished him with many opportunities of this kind, and, as it was one of the greatest pleasures of his life to observe and improve them, so it was very remarkable, that, when any of his friends have been extricated out of difficulties, or reaped benefits by his means, he would never boast of the service he had done them, but modestly decline the praise, by ascribing it to others rather than to himself.

“To his own people he was a tender and affec-

tionate shepherd, sympathising with them in their trials, counselling them in their difficulties, relieving and supporting them in their straits, and praying earnestly for them in all their troubles. So cordially was he united in affection to them, that no solicitations could prevail upon him to remove from them, though considerable offers were made to him from abroad, and great importunity used to prevail on him to accept them. This endeared him very much to his flock, and did not a little contribute to the success of his labours among them.

“He met with many uncommon afflictions, under which he generally appeared easy and cheerful. He did not burden his friends with long and tedious complaints, but poured them out before that God who is able to ‘help in every time of need;’ and he was supported and carried comfortably through several of them. They certainly gave him uneasiness, and might impair his health, but they contributed very much to the improvement of his better part: he came forth out of the furnace as ‘gold tried in the fire,’ and some of the best sermons he ever preached, were those which succeeded his severest exercises. These led his thoughts very far into the mysteries of providence, and enabled him to set many of its darkest scenes in a fair light, that he might com-

fort those which were in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he had been comforted of God."

Mr. Saunders died July 31, 1736, in the forty-second year of his age.

LETTER VII.

The Rev. Samuel Fairclough industriously studied *plainness*, therein following the pattern and example of his old acquaintance, the Rev. Archbishop Usher, and the special counsel and advice of his old friend, Dr. Preston, who discoursing with him at his first entrance upon the ministry, told him that that man was the best preacher who delivered Gospel truths in the plainest scriptural expressions.—*Rev. Samuel Clark.*

There are some things wherein several of the preachers of the present time have the advantage of our learned and pious fathers; but there are other excellences in the sermons of the *Puritanical* age, which I would rejoice to find more studiously revived and cultivated in our day.—*Dr. Watts.*

EVER since the days of Some and Saunders, dissent has been, and still is, adorned with men in whom any denomination of Christians might lawfully rejoice. I can, however, only mention a few. Dr. Bogue, Abraham Booth, George Burder, John Clayton, sen., John Cooke, Peter Edwards, Thomas English, Greville Ewing, Dr. Fawcett, Dr. Fletcher, John Foster, Andrew Fuller, Dr. Gill, John Griffin, Robert Hall, of Arnsby, Robert Hall, of Bristol, Thomas Harmer,

Joseph Hughes, William Kingsbury, Dr. M'All, Dr. Morrison, Edward Parsons, of Leeds, Samuel Pearce, William Roby, Dr. Ryland, Dr. Simpson, W. Shrubsole, Thomas Strange, of Kilsby, John Thornton, of Billericay, Isaac Toms, John Townsend, Dr. Waugh, Dr. Edward Williams, Dr. Robert Winter, and Cornelius Winter. Each of these, and numbers more, to say nothing of the living, would furnish a letter of absorbing interest; and that interest might be increased by a sketch of the revival of religion through the influence of Methodism. The labours and sermons of Whitefield and Wesley, and their successors, give alone a noble view of the goodness which characterises Nonconformity.

It would be no uninteresting employment to trace the history of preaching. An exhibition would involve, it is true, the strangest departure from the sermons of the apostolic times; and a display of absurdities in the "Fathers," which would be far from inspiring the respect so often unwisely demanded. It would show, also, that in the middle ages scholastic "niceties" nearly supplanted the Bible; that to the very dawn of the Reformation texts were taken out of Scotus or Aquinas, instead of the Scriptures; that when Luther, and Melancthon, and others, exemplified a better mode, the magistrates were petitioned for its

suppression; and that in our own country, "Master Perkins," a Puritan, who began to flourish about the year 1580, is thought to have been the first who restored it to its true use, and taught the true manner of it. It would appear, moreover, that the revolution thus effected was too great to be complacently borne. Hearers were annoyed and irritated. To such an extent was the opposition carried, that it is recorded by Robert Bolton as a feature of peculiar excellence in Sir Augustine Nicolls, that he had a "right conceit and commendation of profitable and conscionable sermons." That learned judge was often heard to reply to "contradictions" thus:—"I cannot tell what you call Puritanical sermons, but they come nearest to my conscience and do me the most good."

My limits, however, forbid an enlargement of this kind. I shall proceed, therefore, to a brief notice of preaching among the Nonconformists; premising only, that their ministry is fitly deemed by themselves both orderly and valid, because scriptural. Dr. Watts, in his sermon entitled "A Pattern for a Dissenting Teacher," has proved its *apostolic* character, and shown, that men may still preach without a commission from a national established church, because it was so with the Saviour, who had no orders from the Jewish

priesthood ; and who, accordingly, was looked upon as a schismatic, as a sort of separatist ; and all those that followed him were opposed under that pretence.

The "*effects*" of Christ's preaching are also dwelt upon in the same discourse, in contrast with that of the Jewish doctors. And may not the question be asked, in reference to Nonconformists—What ministry had more unction, or was more fruitful, able, orthodox,* or soul-saving than *theirs* ? Or what ministry was more accordant with inspired authority ; more calculated to humble sinners, to promote holiness, to exalt the Saviour ? Was it not a "teaching"† men to observe all things which Christ commanded ?

Bunyan surely hinted this in the vivid "picture" shown to Christian at the house of the Interpreter. It was not, you may have observed, a volume of the Fathers, or of philosophy, or of heathen poetry or morality, that that "very grave person" had in his hand ; but the "best of books." And Dr. Vaughan, in his exquisite delineation of "Baxter in the Pulpit," conveys the same idea :

* I use the term in relation to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, with which their sermons corresponded. And see the *Life of Dr. Bogue*, by Dr. Bennett, p. 241, Oct. 1827.

† See Note F.

a delineation, by-the-bye, no less befitting Bates, and Manton, and Howe, and Dr. Owen, and Philip, and Matthew Henry, and both the Flavels—father and son—and a host besides, than Baxter. The elder Mr. Flavel, of whom sadly too little is known, had one practice peculiar to himself. You learn from the life, now scarce, of Mr. Gervase Disney, a gentleman who knew him, that at his “*entrance*” upon the public exercises of the Sabbath, he endeavoured, by an awakening exhortation, to raise his people’s affections, and engage them to seriousness. He pressed them to consider with whom they had to do—the great and eternal God who searcheth hearts; what they came about—no less than soul concerns; and that, for aught they knew, their eternal welfare might depend upon improving *that* opportunity. The prayer about to be offered *might* be their last prayer, and the sermon their last sermon.

This desire to benefit mankind was conspicuous also in the *subjects* our venerated progenitors chose. Their biographies contain copious illustrations of their care and wisdom in this matter. You find that they often preached over Psalms, and chapters, and books of Scripture, as well as upon particular topics, and that their pulpit services generally were most edifying. Many of them drew together, and, like Cartwright and

John Bunyan, captivated the largest assemblies. Sir James Stonhouse, in his "Letters," conveys a good idea of Dr. Doddridge's preaching by describing his congregation as "*all ear*."

There was this difference, however, between the men of olden times and the moderns. The former laboured long amidst informers and spies, and not unfrequently with prisons, and fines, and banishment, if not death, in view. Happily, the latter knew none of these things; nor were they acquainted with civil war, save only as a matter of history. Whereas many of the former were familiar with *that* tremendous calamity. When the battle was fought at Edge Hill, Baxter was preaching at Alcester. He says, his auditors heard the cannon, but his voice hindered *him*; and the next day, riding with Mr. Clark, the minister of the place, to the field, they saw, he piteously adds, "the dead bodies of Englishmen slain by one another."

But, notwithstanding their exposure and their sorrows, they lived as God's devoted servants; their hearers sustained them by their prayers; and they preached as dying men; ready, so Dr. Jabez Earle remarked of himself, to "step out of the pulpit into eternity." Preaching, in their estimation, as in that of the Saviour, his apostles, and the reformers, held the chief place. They

saw in it an ordinance divinely appointed for converting men to God. All their energies, therefore, were directed to make it, in dependence on the influence which is from above, effective; to make their sermons, as Mr. Fenner says, "haunt their hearers." While many were discussing morality instead of theology, and clothing pharisaic discourses in cumbrous learning, and poetry, and mysticism; *they*, after the example of the greatest of the apostles, set forth Christ;—crucified before men's eyes;—that they might be saved.

" Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
 Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan !
 No meretricious graces to beguile,
 No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;
 From ostentation, as from weakness, free,
 It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
 Majestic in its own simplicity.
 Inscribed above the portal, from afar
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-quickenings words—BELIEVE and LIVE !
 Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,
 Despise the plain direction, and are lost."—*Cowper*.

Hence their great seriousness and diligence in preparation; and the plainness, earnestness, and tenderness, too, which marked their delivery. Mr. Perkins, as he increased in years, often said, that to preach *mercy* was the minister's proper office.

And Philip Henry used to remark, that "a minister's way is to be a *beseeking* way. That," said he, "is the right Gospel way; but they are sometimes to change their voice, and to terrify. They are to *begin* with *beseekings*, but if that will not do, the Gospel *hath* threatenings."*

The earnestness of many of the Puritans and Nonconformists may have been increased, and probably was so, by the *uncertainty* which attended their opportunities. But it originated in a settled conviction of the importance of religion: in a vivid impression of the worth of souls, and the danger which hung over them; and in a happy experience likewise of the Redeemer's preciousness. They had *tasted* that the Lord is gracious. They *knew* Christ Jesus, and felt the constraining influence of his love. It was "shed abroad" in their hearts "by the power of the Holy Ghost." Their piety, consequently, was as warm as it was genuine, and being nourished in secret, it was seen and felt.

From their closets they went to their pulpits; and, however unconsciously to themselves, they discovered the communion they had had with God. You are told there was a "marvellous majesty" in that excellent Puritan Henry Whitfield, who went to New England; when he was in the

* From Rev. Matt. Henry's MS.

pulpit. And in prayer their skill was such as has never been surpassed. It was so great at times, as to astonish even the most intelligent of their fellow-worshippers. One who knew Mr. Shaw said of him,—and it was true of John Howe and Philip Henry, in fact of so many as to forbid enumeration,—that “for two or three hours together he could pour out prayer to God, without tautology or vain repetition, with such vigour and fervour, and such holy words, importunity, faith, and humble boldness, as to dissolve the whole assembly into tears.”

Their regard to the inspired volume was equally remarkable. It was not only prominent in every service, but was first in their affections; the one book, in short, of their study, over which they wept, and thought, and prayed, and into the very spirit of which they drank. To show its value and commend its beauties, they taxed their wits to the uttermost.

John Howe's tenth lecture on the Principles of the Oracles of God states, that Dr. Goodwin, when a student at Cambridge, went to Dedham, to hear Mr. Rogers on his lecture-day: a lecture so thronged that those who were not very early had no chance of getting room, although the church was large. Mr. Rogers's subject was the Scriptures; and in the course of his remarks he

expostulated with his audience for *neglecting* the word of God. First, he personated God to the people. "Well, I have trusted you so long with my Bible. You have slighted it. It lies in such and such houses covered with dust and cobwebs. You care not to look into it. Do you use my Bible so? You shall have it no longer." Then, taking it from the cushion, he seemed as if he were going away with it, but immediately turned again, and personating the people to God, fell on his knees, cried, and pleaded most earnestly,—“Lord, whatsoever thou doest to us, take not thy Bible from us. Kill our children. Burn our houses. Destroy our goods, only spare us thy Bible; only take not away thy Bible.” He now again personated God,—“Say you *so*? Well, I will try you awhile longer—and here is my Bible for you. I will see how you will use it; whether you will love it more; whether you will value it more; whether you will observe it more; whether you will practise it more; and live more according to it.” By these actions the congregation was put into the strangest posture the Doctor had ever seen. The place was a mere Bochim. And he himself, when he got out to take horse again, was fain to hang a quarter of an hour upon the animal’s neck weeping, before he had power to mount.

Such electricity in preaching, if the expression

is lawful, was not then uncommon ; a memorable instance occurred, too, when Dr. Bogue preached at the formation of the London Missionary Society ;* and it more or less pervaded the ordinary ministry of Whitfield and Wesley, Daniel Wilcox, Mr. Lavington, Thomas Spencer, Robert Hall, Williams of the Wern, Christmas Evans, and John Elias.

* Life of Dr. Bogue, p. 179, *ut supra*.

LETTER VIII.

Christianity alloweth no such stoicism as strippeth men of humanity, and bringeth in a kind either of brutish immanity, or doggish stupidity. No. The more sincere grace, questionless the more *love*; and the more love to our brethren, the more bowels of compassion, the more tenderness of affection, and the more effectual apprehension of other men's misfortunes.—*Rev. Thomas Gataker.*

Mr. Thomas Vincent was a minister of eminent usefulness while he lived, especially in the time of the dreadful plague, and whose memory is still deservedly very dear and precious to those that knew him; like a rose which adorns the garden, and perfumes the air while 'tis growing on the tree, and hath a fragrant smell, too, a long time after it is gathered, and dead.—*Rev. Nathaniel Taylor.*

THE eccentric vicar of Everton, Mr. Berridge, addressed a young friend—Mr. Lucas, afterwards of Shrewsbury—just settled in the ministry among Dissenters, in the following terms: “Much reading and thinking may make a popular minister; but much secret prayer must make a powerful preacher. If you converse much with God on the mount, as Moses did, and the old

Puritans did, your hearers will see a Gospel lustre on your countenance, and stand in awe of you ; and, what is best of all, like Moses, you will not be sensible of that lustre, while others see it, and reverence it. Much secret prayer will solemnise your heart, and make your visits savoury, as well as your sermons. The old Puritans visited their flocks by house-row ; the visits were short—they talked a little for God, and then concluded with prayer to God ; an excellent rule, which prevented tittle-tattle, and made visits profitable.”

These observations are confirmed by every part of Puritanic and Nonconforming history. You are struck with the arduous as well as incessant labours of the honoured men ; for most of them preached and visited at a time when obstacles presented themselves on every hand ;* and when their flocks were more like scattered sheep, than is now the case with settled congregations. How did Mr. Joseph Alleine spend five afternoons a week in pastoral visitation—urging to family duties ; catechising ; exhorting ; persuading heads of families to give their children and servants time for secret duties, and to encourage them therein ! How did many of them, like Mr.

* See Note G.

Blackerby, ride from house to house! Sometimes they offered prayer; sometimes they deposited heavenly counsels; sometimes they did both; and passed on. At other times they tarried and preached, and their discourses were of the most pains-taking kind. The manuscripts of many such sermons still remain, and their preparation need not have been more exact had they been intended for a city congregation. Whatever difficulties presented themselves as to distance, or weather, the consideration that it was *before the Lord* satisfied them.

There was one short interval when Nonconformity, notwithstanding the Five Mile Act, and other horrid laws, was allowed range, and then you saw what *would* have been, had nothing "hindered." I allude to the year 1665, the time of the Plague in London. The goodness of the Nonconformist ministers at that awful season shone brightly. Old Mrs. Strype, the historian's mother, tells us, that many of them preached openly. "All," she adds, "go as they will, for all the bishops are out of the way, and doctors and the best men who are esteemed are fled. *We* have, sometimes, some of those good men that exercise in our own house."

Instead of referring you to De Foe's "Journal," which is still popular, I prefer mentioning a book

to which De Foe was largely indebted. It is entitled, "God's Terrible Voice in the City, wherein you have the sound of the voice in the two late dreadful judgments of Plague and Fire in London ; and the interpretation of the voice," by Thomas Vincent : 5th ed. 1667. That spirit-stirring volume tells you how you could "behold the red crosses, and read in great letters, 'Lord have mercy upon us,' on the doors ; and watchmen standing before them with halberts, and such a solitude about those places, and people passing by them so gingerly, and with such fearful looks, as if they had been lined with enemies in ambush, that waited to destroy them."

It shows you that *then* it was that Mr. Vincent, and others who had been "silenced," braved disease, and prisons too,—just as the martyred Wishart did when the plague broke out at Dundee,—to serve the spiritual interests of their fellow-men. *They* could not see the ignorant and impenitent falling around, "as thick as leaves in autumn when shaken by a mighty wind," without at least one effort to save their never-dying souls.

At that time, too, Mr. Brooks published his "Privie Key of Heaven, or Twenty Arguments for Closet Prayer ;" with twenty special lessons that were to be learnt from the raging pestilence.

The "sore visitation" (brought into his family from London) was also improved by Mr. Shaw, in a small book, entitled, "A Welcome to the Plague." The "address to the reader" is autobiographical, and indicative of such tenderness and devotion as makes it hard to say which exceeds—the writer's sensibility, or his admiration of the "goodness, holiness, and perfection of the will of God," and profound submission to it.

Of Brooks and Shaw, and not a few others of their fellow-labourers, we know little except from their writings; but of Mr. Vincent we are privileged with more information; and can mark his "end." A funeral sermon, published by the Rev. Samuel Slater, has, indeed, preserved a faithful account both of his life and death. The one was blameless and holy; the other unspeakably joyous "and full of glory." "He could take his leave," the preacher says, "with a composed spirit, and shake hands with all." His expressions were these—"Farewell the world, the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world; farewell sin, I shall ever be with the Lord. Farewell, my dear wife. Farewell, my dear children. Farewell, my servants; and farewell, my spiritual children. Be careful in your choice of a pastor: choose one who in his doctrine,

life, and manners, may adorn the Gospel. I shall be glad to meet you all in heaven."

He died 15th of October, 1678, aged only forty-four.

LETTER IX.

The Dissenters in England are a class of religious people whose profession has been as honourable and consistent, and whose services to their country have been as important and valuable, as those of any other community with whom they can be compared. Their ministers have been distinguished for talents and learning; for piety and diligence; for usefulness in the church of God, and for honourable estimation in society. Many *private* Christians among them have been exemplary for personal piety, for regular attention to family religion, and for strict integrity in business.—*Congregational Magazine*.

In the practice of the moral virtues, it will hardly be denied that Dissenters are at least as exemplary as their neighbours; while in the more immediate duties of religion, if there be any distinction, it lies in their carrying to a greater height, sentiments of seriousness and devotion.—*Rev. Robert Hall*.

IN our admiration of the ecclesiastics of Puritanism and Nonconformity there is danger of neglecting, if not of forgetting, the talented and godly persons who not only co-operated with them, and suffered for righteousness' sake, but who often succoured them in adversity; made

suggestions* which led to important consequences; and whose merits will bear the closest scrutiny.

There has been a goodly number of such: some were skilful theologians; some are renowned for their matchless writings. Others, though venerated by a few, are unknown to most. Is it not the case as to Henry Care, who wrote the "Weekly Pacquet of News from Rome," perhaps *the* prototype of periodical literature? And Thomas Delaune, the author of the "Plea for the Nonconformists?" And Joseph Pitt, noted for the fidelity of his account of the "Manners and Customs of Mohammedans?"

The doings of Puritan and Nonconformist laymen would grace the annals of any Christian community. I could instance martyrs, and write of Saunders and Glover, and a "noble army who, by suffering," obtained a good report. "Men," Matthew Henry observed, who "chose to die rather than go to mass:" who "were wonderfully supported; went to heaven in a fiery chariot. How precious are their memories! The ordinances of Christ are not only the purchase of *his* blood, but of the blood of the martyrs. Value them accordingly. Hate idolatry

* See Note H.

because it has been supported by cruelty. Transubstantiation was the burning doctrine.”*

I might also advert to Brook, and Hampden, and Pym, men of piety as well as patriotism and valour. The name, too, of the Esquire of Stapleford, John Bruen, though noticed in the ninth of the former “Letters,” is introduced here because his Life, by the Rev. W. Hinde, contains a lengthened portraiture of lay Puritanism; and in reading it you will not overlook the singular tale of his servant, Robert Pasfield.

Then, to advert chiefly to Englishmen, (though Scotland and Ireland had eminent Puritan Christians,) there was Richard Cromwell, who, for a short time, filled a throne. He was an Independent, and the intimate friend of Howe. And were not Milton, the glory of the English nation; John Locke; Colonel Hutchinson; Sir Richard Ellys; and Daniel De Foe; of the same fraternity? Nor must Mr. Henry Gearing; or Mr. Joseph Barrett; or Lord Barrington, the grandson of the venerable Caryl; or Abraham Sharp; or Colonel Gardiner; or Joseph Williams; or Mr. John Morison, of Millseat; or John Howard; or Mr. John Clement; or W. F. Durant; or Thomas Welman, Esq.; or Mr. May, of Maldon;

* Original manuscript.

or the late Mr. Justice, a deacon of the Congregational church at Mallow, be overlooked, or forgotten. The biographer of the last-named gentleman says that "he was no unstable Reuben, moved about with every wind of doctrine; but" one who "stood firm and unmoved on the tried Rock. He walked steadily in the good old ways of the primitive Christians, the Waldenses, the Reformers, the Puritans, and Nonconformists, whose characters he admired, and many of whose works he had read."*

These are a sample only. Separate lives have been written of most of them. That of Joseph Williams—with extracts from his Diary, and many of his Letters and Meditations—has been enlarged by his descendant, Mr. Hanbury, and can scarcely be read too often. Nor can I too strongly recommend to your perusal Mr. Shower's account of Dr. Nehemiah Grew; Dr. Watts' of Sir John Hartopp; Dr. Wilton's of Mr. Joseph Longhurst; Dr. Bogue's of Mr. Lobb, of Southampton; and Dr. Wardlaw's of his father.† You have there lay nonconformity exhibited to the life; and so long as unostentatious piety has any attraction, it cannot fail to charm.

* Congregational Magazine, June, 1838.

† An Appendix to Dr. Wardlaw's Lectures on the Book of Ecclesiastes, vol. ii. p. 335. October, 1821.

I wish, whether Mr. Joshua Wilson's enlarged edition of Palmer's Nonconformist Memorial shall ever appear or not, that he, or some other competent person, would furnish a supplemental volume, to consist of Nonconformist laymen and women. The materials are abundant, and in some instances rich.

In female excellence, indeed, Nonconformist chronicles are scarcely less fertile than in that of men. Fox's Martyrology tells you of Anne Askew, Alice Driver, and "Mistress" Joyce Lewes, besides other real Puritans, who "sealed their testimony with their blood:" I prefer, however, again drawing your attention to later times. I can still but select, and I omit some names because they have been already mentioned. There were, then, the Lady Mary Pye, "an old Puritan, eminent for piety, love, prudence, and bounty, the glory of her family;"* the Countess of Meath; the Lady Wharton, of whom you see something in the second dedication to the fourth volume of Dr. Manton's Works; the Ladies Waller, Hobart, and Hewley; Lady Wilbraham, of Weston, in Shropshire, who was not ashamed, Dr. Daniel Williams says, "of the Dissenters' chain;" Mrs. Alice Heywood,

* See Dr. Staunton's Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Elizabeth Wilkinson. 4to. 1659. "To the Reader."

Mrs. P. Henry, Mrs. Baxter, Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Hasselborn, Mrs. Hulton, Mrs. Housman, Mrs. Bulkley, Miss Neale, Mrs. Graham, Mrs. Jannet Dean, Mrs. Welman, Mrs. Jane Preston, Mrs. Newnham, Jane Taylor, Mrs. Ewing, and Mrs. James, of Birmingham ; all persons of deserved distinction, and concerning most of whom there are separate narratives.

One was written by Dr. Collinges, and is rare. It was published in 1669, and entitled, "The Excellent Woman, discoursed more privately from Prov. xxxi. 29, 30, 31, upon occasion of the death of the Right Honourable the Lady Frances Hobart." The dedication was to her ladyship's sister, the Countess Dowager of Exeter ; and the book altogether claims regard ; the more so, because the Doctor's opportunities for observation were singularly good.

Not a few other admirable females have been delineated in funeral sermons and magazine obituaries ; but I must only specify those by Mr. Jay, for Mrs. Head and Mrs. Berry ; and that of Dr. Robert Winter, for Mrs. Hill ; the Sketch of Mrs. Bass, in the Evangelical Magazine for 1809 ; of Mrs. Loader, in that for 1842 ; and Mrs. Newman, in the seventeenth volume of the Congregational Magazine.

An acquaintance with these fascinating memo-

rials will tend to convince you that those traits of character which marked the divines and laymen among the Puritans and Nonconformists, pertain also to the *women* of that community. There was the same consecration to God, and the same rousing up from apathy* in his service: the same industry; the same love to profitable seclusion; to reading the Bible and good books, to writing hymns and sermons, and transcribing manuscripts; to making selections from the Scriptures, particularly evidences of a gracious state and precious promises: and the same aim at usefulness. The old female biography displays great care about domestic duties; the education of children; and the whole routine of household superintendence. It shows that the women were not "idle, wandering about from house to house;" nor "tattlers and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not;" but "chaste; keepers at home;" and like that heroine, Mrs. Bunyan, "lovers of their husbands and children:" that they guided their houses with discretion; were frugal in their habits; economical of their time; and unceasing in the observation of all religious duties, especially those of the closet. They declared *plainly* that they "were not of the world," but

* See Note I.

“strangers and pilgrims,” seeking “a better, even a heavenly country.” For, as Dr. Winter noticed in his discourse at the ordination of Dr. H. F. Burder, “the spirit of Owen and Baxter, of Bates and Manton, of Howe and Henry, was diffused through their *congregations*.”

That spirit was one pre-eminently of love for the Lord’s day and the public offices of religion. The daily piety of these worthies was thus fed ; their contentment* nurtured ; their real character disclosed ; and their minds upheld under manifold afflictions. Nothing was more inculcated by the Nonconformist preachers than such an affection, and if it was observed to cool, it was soon noticed and faithfully handled.

Mr. Newcome, addressing Mr. Matthew Henry’s congregation at Chester on the 8th of August, 1689, thus taught : “ Gracious souls *will* address themselves to Christ wherever he is to be found ; and he *is* to be found in the ordinances—public, private, secret. You may know your temper by your inclination” to them. “ The word preached is the seed of God.” And “ it makes your state suspicious when you have liberty, and yet you

* It was a common saying among the Puritans—Brown bread and the Gospel are good fare. Henry’s Exposition on Isaiah xxx. 20, 21. And see the Rev. R. Greenham’s Works, p. 28. fol. 1605.

neglect those opportunities, which formerly you pretended a great desire of. The sheep of Christ will *follow* Christ. They are for the 'green pastures,' and will venture the loss of their fleece to get off the burnt common to the good pasture. Every sermon you are bound to come to, except you can give a good account to Almighty God of what you are doing elsewhere. Right souls need it all. Perhaps that you have most need of may be on foot when you are away. Thomas lost a sight of Christ by one absence. *Come*, with a design to get something. 'Hear, that your souls may live.' It is a grievous loss to lose a Sabbath."*

Mr. Philip Henry, noticing the "*pains*" one of his farm-house congregations took to *hear*, spoke to them as follows: "See that you *profit*. It was the saying of a good man, (Francis Wolfe, now with God,) I find it much more easy to travel five miles to hear a sermon, than to spend a quarter of an hour in laying it up in my heart by meditation. Therefore remember this—In every sermon fasten upon some one thing that is the drift, and especially that which is most suitable to you: and be sure to 'hide' *that*. Sit alone awhile, and meditate upon what you have heard. Chew

* From the Rev. Matt. Henry's manuscript.

the cud. Discourse of it with others as you have opportunity. You little know what good this may do.—Pray over it. It is an excellent thing to turn a sermon into a prayer.—Practise it in your life. This is the best way of remembering. *I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.*”*

After the pattern of the first Christians, our ancestors strove to be present at the *beginning* of religious exercises. It was their custom also to “take notes” both of sermons and expositions.

They were, moreover, very humble hearers; their felt necessities, and their regard to Divine truth, led them to receive the word with great meekness, candour, and affection. Mr. Hildersham often said that he never heard any godly minister preach, though but of weak parts, but he got *some* benefit by him.

* Rev. P. Henry, at Wrenbury, July 2, 1691. From Mrs. Savage’s manuscript.

LETTER X.

Christians are born of the Spirit of God: there is a mighty change wrought in and upon them; and it consists chiefly in the renewing of the soul after the image of God, the forming of Christ upon the heart, or inner man. This *inward* change is the very soul and life of Christianity. You may as well call him a man whose soul is not in him, as call him a Christian who hath not the Spirit of Christ in him.—*Rev. Richard Alleine.*

Where religion doth vitally inform, animate, and actuate men's souls, it doth make them rightly to understand, that the kingdom of Christ is *not* the thriving of parties, the strengthening of factions, the advancement of any particular interest, though it seem to be of never so evangelical a complexion; no, nor yet the proselyting of the world to the profession of Christianity, or of the Christian world to the purer and more reformed profession of it, (though these latter would be a great external honour to the person of Christ;) but that it is most properly and happily propagated in the *spirits* of men, and that wherever there is faith, patience, humility, self-denial, contempt of this world, and pregnant hopes of a better; pure obedience to God, and sincere benignity to men, here and there is the kingdom of God, Christ regnant, and the Gospel in the power and triumph of it.—*Rev. Samuel Shaw.*

WHEN Mr. Hart wrote in his fifty-sixth hymn, that

“ True religion's more than notion ;
Something must be known and felt,”

he touched a string that vibrates from one end of

Puritanism and Nonconformity to the other. For what was it but personal, experimental religion, that distinguished Puritans and Nonconformists, and made them "great?"

I have used the term *personal*, because it is to be feared that mistakes awfully ruinous arise from writing and speaking of religion in a sense merely national. Can any one, taking the Scriptures as a guide, doubt that there may be *such* a religion, where there is in reality none at all? Or that there may be birth and baptism in a country called Christian, and confirmation, and a frequent reception of the Lord's supper, and much besides that looks well, without any participation in what constitutes true religion? The inspired volume teaches us that that holy and ennobling principle has "a great deal more in it"—the words are those of the famous Puritan, Mr. Pinke—"than the formalities of coming to church, carrying a Bible, hearing a sermon,"—it is the production of Almighty power and grace. It commences in what is denominated a new creation, a new birth, a new heart; and is the effect of everlasting love. It consists in the fear and love of Jehovah; in the exercise of repentance and faith; in humility, self-denial, and mortification of sin; in the renunciation of our own righteousness, and the acceptance of Christ's; in taking up the cross and following him; in hearing his voice; in the

fruits of the Spirit; in nonconformity to, and victory over, the world; in separation from the ungodly; in short, in "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." Every part and branch of it thus denoting that only which is, or can be, *personal*. "He is not a Jew"—or a child of God—"who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew"—really one of the people of God—"who is one *inwardly*, and circumcision is that of the *heart*, in the spirit, and not in the letter."

The religion that is genuine has to do entirely with the realities of the *Christian* state as one of life, of motive, and the affections; of vigilance and conflict; of effort, obedience, and attainment. Hence, believers have been led to note their doings as well as to "rejoice in Christ Jesus." Self-knowledge, the consequence of Divine illumination, has not only prevented their placing any "confidence in the flesh," but driven them to the Saviour as their only righteousness, refuge, and hope. And is it not encouraging to mark, whenever practicable, those fluctuations of experience, those alternations of feeling, those perceptions of weakness, and infirmity and deficiency, those constant strifes within—which are peculiar to the regenerated? "There is this difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate; an

unregenerate person hath some conflicts within himself concerning sin, but they are a burden to him : he had rather a great deal be without them than be troubled thus. With the godly man it is not so. He rejoices in it as a mercy, and can bless God from his very soul, that there is such a principle *within him*, to fight against sin.”*

Now it was this *operative* religion, this opposition to evil—so inseparable from aspirations after holiness,—which Shaw “ discovers” in his “ Emmanuel ;” whose “ Rise and Progress in the Soul” Dr. Doddridge so impressively traced ; which the excellent John Reynolds, of Shrewsbury, displayed, with signal power, in his “ Religion of Jesus delineated ;” which renders Andrew Fuller’s “ Backslider,” and Dr. Bennett’s “ Religion of the Closet,” and Mr. Griffin’s discourse on the “ Decline of Religion,” and Mr. Jay’s “ Christian contemplated,” and my lamented friend, Dr. Joseph Fletcher’s pastoral inquiry—“ Is all well ?”—so edifying and important : and which, in a word, embalms the memory of the Puritans and Nonconformists. A late member of the Established Church—Mr. Knox—particularly noticed it, as you may see in the fourth volume of his “ Remains ;” and he expressed his belief that

* Rev. Philip Henry. Orig. MS.

the Puritans were providentially destined "to urge, and in many, indeed, innumerable instances, to exemplify that *inward* religion, so frequently called fanaticism, which St. Paul and St. Peter dwelt upon in their epistles."

Hence it was not easy to impose upon them by appearances. They judged of faith by its proper *fruits*. Such being the test laid down by our Lord himself, little regard, except as an occasion for vigilance and hope, was paid to professions. It was not by the mere acquisition of knowledge, but by what a man evidently *believed* and *loved*, that they formed their opinion, and by which they wished mankind to judge themselves. Neither was it talking about even the best things to which they looked, but learning of Christ, and doing his will. Nor was it groans and complaints of the world, and wishing to be out of it, as if the *use* were evil, that they valued; but not loving it, overcoming it by the victories of faith,—and, as Dr. Harris counselled his children, "acting religion in their callings."*

Nothing *like* proxyism in religion, whether it relate to belief or practice, can be associated with Puritanism and Nonconformity. All was vital,

* Am I in Christ? and am I in my calling? are two good questions. Rev. Matt. Henry. Orig. MS.

practical, personal. The language was that of the Psalmist, "I will love thee, O Lord, *my* strength. The Lord is *my* rock, and *my* fortress, and *my* deliverer: *my* God, *my* strength, in whom I will trust; *my* buckler, and the horn of *my* salvation, and *my* high tower:" of the apostle—"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for *me*."* Mr. Jeremiah Whitaker constantly claimed propriety in Jehovah, calling him—*my* God, and *my* Father. And Luther used to affirm that the sweetness of Christianity lay in pronouns.

Mr. Doolittle, celebrated as a tutor in theology, and for his attention to the young, catechised the youth and adults of his congregation every Lord's day. The question, on one occasion, being—"What is effectual calling?" the reply was given in the words of the Assembly's catechism. Mr. Doolittle proposed that it should be answered by changing the words *us* and *our*, into *me* and *my*. A solemn silence followed; many felt the vast importance of the proposal; but none had courage to speak. At length a young man, about twenty-eight years of age, and with every mark of a

* See Note J.

broken and contrite heart, was enabled, by Divine grace, to say—Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing *me* of my sins and misery, enlightening *my* mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing *my* will, did persuade and enable *me* to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to *me* in the Gospel.

It is just this assurance of grace and salvation which, although not favoured by Dr. Dwight any more than some other divines of great piety, seems taught in Scripture, and to be included in a conscious belief of the Gospel. Many of the Puritans and Nonconformists, like the Reformers and primitive Christians, attained it. They urged the attainment of it; and regarded it as a "special spur"—the language is Philip Henry's—"to duty." "Moses," he adds, "had respect to the recompense of the reward, and that carried him through temptation. They are mightily *out* that think this assurance makes people careless and presumptuous. No. None walk more closely with God than those that have the clearest evidences for heaven."*

A better example either of the enjoyment or the influence of such "assurance," need not be required than the case of Mrs. Savage. You see

* Philip Henry. From the Rev. Matt. Henry's manuscript.

both fully in her published "Life;" and her manuscript diaries, from which the illustrations there preserved were extracted, abound with evidence on the subject.

Her father, Mr. Philip Henry, whom she passionately loved, having visited her, shortly before her expected confinement, she writes, on his returning home, November 12, 1691—"It may be I have taken my last farewell of him, and that death may be in the approaching hour of travail: *be it so*. I do not fear the worst. I know him to be a serpent without a sting."*

The following Sabbath she says—"My God doth graciously sometimes vouchsafe me his presence in my solitude, which makes my life sweet. This week I found sweetness in calling Christ *my* life, Col. iii. 4. He *is my* life, and he shall appear: *when* he shall appear, *I* shall be like him."†

Again—"I had spiritual breathings in reading Psalms fourteen and sixty-three, which were penned by that holy man when in a state of banishment from God's ordinances. Methinks the first words of the sixty-third are enough. 'O God, thou art *my* God.' At this my soul hastily catches. Thou art *my* God."‡

* Orig. MS.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

What, besides such an assurance, could have enabled this admirable woman to pen the following memorandum on a subject of universal tenderness ; and which has often tried the strongest faith—"It may be I am within a step of beginning my everlasting Sabbath. I have a good hope through grace, that death to *me* shall not be an enemy, but a friend : and though I am sometimes so foolish as to desire life *for the sake of my little ones* ; yet when I consider the goodness of my God, who can and will be infinitely more to them than the dearest parent, I freely resign *them* to him, as all else that is dear to me."*

This temper of mind, so expressive of subjection to Jehovah, and confidence in his favour, equally distinguished the late revered Cornelius Winter, and Dr. Edward Williams. Nor could the most casual observer help seeing in those remarkable men the influence of a "good hope ;" so "lively," indeed, as seldom, if ever, to waver. They enjoyed, habitually, as the consequence, "perfect peace;" the "peace that passeth understanding ;" and which can be associated only with a calm, steady, well-founded assurance of salvation.

* Orig. MS.

Does it not deserve thought *why* so few Christians, comparatively, appear to mind the same thing? Mr. Brooks noticed in his day, and avowed it with grief in his "Unsearchable Riches of Christ," that even among such Christians as he hoped to meet in heaven, there was "scarce one of forty, nay, not one of a hundred, that was groundedly able to make out his interest in the Lord Jesus." "Most Christians," he adds, "live between hope and fear, between doubting and believing." Mr. Sheppard remarks in his "Thoughts," that "the number of Christians in modern days who combine a full assurance of salvation with a spirit of unimpeachable humility," he has "not observed to be great." But the Gospel is the same it ever was; the promises the same; the Saviour the same; faith and hope the same; the witness of the Spirit the same; *now*, as they ever were. How then is it?

Instead of attempting to answer this question, I will ask you to read an admirable ~~little~~ volume, *dele* published by a clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. David Pitcairn, entitled, "Christ our Rest; or, the Doubts and Fears of the Believer practically Considered."

LETTER XI.

Then our conversation is in heaven, when, in earthly employments yet we are heavenly: when we use earthly things after a heavenly manner. It is not the place that God looks at so much; where his saints are, as what they do. Though while we live on the earth we use earthly things, yet when we can use them in a heavenly manner, then our conversation may be in heaven, though we be upon the earth.—*Rev. Jeremiah Burroughs.*

You should habituate and accustom yourself to converse in the general with *spiritual* things. You will be as the things are you converse most with; they will leave their stamp and impress on you; wandering after vanity, you will become vain; minding earthly things, you will become earthly. Accordingly, being much taken up with spiritual things, you will bear their image, and become spiritual.—*Rev. John Howe.*

I SHALL separately notice only one other branch of Christian excellence that signalised the Puritans and Nonconformists; namely, their *spirituality of mind*. You may have inferred it, in the absence of other evidence, from the practical aspect of their religion. For does it not require a high

degree of this grace to relish the faithful enforcement of personal and social *duties*; a much higher degree than to enjoy the doctrinal peculiarities of any system of religious truth? To "delight in the law of God after the inward man," is an attainment, it has been well remarked, which implies a far more advanced state of character than to delight in the discovery of a way of escape for the guilty.

You are acquainted, I hope, with "The Grace and Duty of being Spiritually-minded," by that Coryphæus of Independency, Dr. John Owen.* It is a treatise on Romans viii. 6, and pregnant with all the searching sagacity and ponderous wisdom which mark his productions.

The duty is one of vast importance, and one in which no true Christian can feel otherwise than interested. In the Psalms of the monarch of Israel you see a pattern of its right exercise. He seems to have been ever extracting heavenly thoughts from all he saw, and all he knew. The jubilee trumpet, the flowing river, the thirsty hart, the stately tree, were so many helps to his ascending soul. God was his shepherd, his hiding-place, his sun, his shield, his strong tower,

* The author of Nonconformist Portraits, in the Congregational Magazine for October, 1818, calls him,

"A mild *Shekinah* of incarnate light."

his fortress, his refuge, his rock. These are only examples ; but they show you how visible things, and the incidents of his chequered life, led him to "his portion :—" to his "exceeding joy."

Such has been the practice of the "saints" ever since. Not only have they habitually "looked* at things not seen and eternal,"—made *them* their main scope and aim,—but, as rightly influenced, and as living up, in some measure, to their privileges, everything above and around them, as well as the written word, has been rendered tributary to their best interests. They have risen "through nature" to Him that filleth all in all.

The subject was illustrated by Dr. Spurstowe, an Independent, the friend of Hampden, and chaplain to his troops, in his "Spiritual Chemist :—" by Samuel Shaw, in his "True Christian's Test :—" by Flavel, in his "Husbandry Spiritualised :—" by Dr. Manton, whom Archbishop Usher pronounced "one of the best preachers in England," in his sixteenth sermon upon the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm : and by Mr. Meikle, in his "Surveys," "Memorials," and "Meditations."

Mr. Joseph Alleine was accustomed, "in his devotions, to converse with the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field." He delighted to

* See Note K.

walk "with streams and plants:" they uttered "to his attentive ear the praise and knowledge of his Creator." In his unsettled sojournings he often, to use his own words, "looked back with sweetness and content on the places of his former pleasant retirements, setting a mark upon those which had marvellously pleased him in his solitudes, by administering to his contemplative delight."

With what a zest does Mr. Nathaniel Vincent, while recording his daily habits and advantages, advert to similar joys! Addressing the "truly honourable lady, Hester Lady Blount," in the "Epistle Dedicatory" to his "Discourse on the Spirit of Prayer," in strains of grateful admiration of her "civility and bounty," he says—"Tis very pleasing to me to reflect on the opportunities I had when I lived at Tittenhanger"—in Hertfordshire—"your stately house; not only of studying, but of performing the secret duties of prayer and meditation, wherein communion with God is so exceeding sweet, that all sensual delights and pleasures are contemptible in comparison. At that time the world was presented to me in its gayest dress. Your house large and bravely furnished. Your gardens delightful. Your park and walks hardly to be matched. Your table abundantly and sumptuously furnished.

Yet I must needs tell you that *God* was ten thousand times more to me than all this. When I sought him with my whole heart, and found him ; when I begged his grace, and had the grace I begged for,—*this*, this was it which made my life happy. *This* made me cheerful indeed, only I was sorry to see others take up, and be so much transported with lower pleasures.”

Mr. Halyburton records, that after he had got relief from soul distress, by faith in the crucified Redeemer, *whatever occurred* in reading, in meditation, in converse, in daily observation, was by, and to, his mind spiritualised. It was this Christian grace that gave such vigour and sanctity to the associations and habits, as well as the treatises, of the Puritans and Nonconformists. One who knew the parties remarked, that as Mr. Dod turned earth into heaven by a spiritual improvement of earthly affairs, so Mr. Ball reconciled earth and heaven, because worldly occasions were no distractions to him in his journey thither.

The same habit led them to do common actions “after a godly sort ;” and you thus discover the healthiness of their souls. Mr. Trosse, once giving alms, observed, that “it is a mercy we *have* objects of charity, wherein we may show our love to Jesus Christ.” “I wish good speed,” said Mrs. Savage, in one of her unpublished letters, “to

the cradle. It is comfortable to hope we are nursing *for God*; to bear up his name in the world. However, duty is ours."

Her brother, Matthew Henry, used to say, "Remember these two lessons—In the midst of fulness enjoy *God* in all: In the midst of emptiness enjoy *all* in God."* And, in his "Directions for Daily Communion" with Him who is invisible, he is instructively minute on this subject, and shows how, even in inquiring after public affairs, we should "wait upon God;" a habit said to have been common with the late Dr. Bogue: *he* read the newspaper to see how the Almighty governs the world.

What can be more solemn than the following sentence, penned by Mrs. Savage, from the lips of that faithful minister, the Rev. Samuel Lawrence? "To a godly man, God is all: the creature nothing. To a carnal man, who is an idolater; the creature is all, God is nothing. Look into your towns, houses, and hearts. Are there not many of those Protestant idolaters among us?"†

But in the volume on the "Grace and Duty of being Spiritually-minded," to which I have alluded, Dr. Owen, noticing *objects* of "spiritual thoughts," mentions particularly—"Christ him-

* From Mrs. Savage's manuscript.

† Ibid.

self at the right hand of God ;” and refers to the “treatise” he then “designed,” and which was afterwards published, on “Beholding the Glory of Christ both here, and unto Eternity.” The Saviour *was*, with the Puritans and Nonconformists, the theme pre-eminently of their delighted, prolonged, and frequent meditations. “I have read,” the good Doctor just mentioned says, “of those who have lived and died in *continual* contemplation of him, so far as the imperfection of our present state will admit. I have known *them*, I do know them, who call themselves unto a reproof, if at any time he hath been many minutes out of their thoughts.” The fact is—to them “to *live*” was “Christ.” He was their “all in all.”

And—in the Countess of Huntingdon’s collection of hymns, some lines by an unknown author are preserved, which, in addition to being always seasonable, so strikingly set forth the spiritual-mindedness of Puritans and Nonconformists, in this view of it, as to make the transcription almost imperative.

“CHRIST, THE BELIEVER’S ALL.”

In *Christ* my treasure’s all contain’d ;
By him my feeble soul’s sustain’d ;
From him I all things do receive,
Through him my soul does daily live.

With him I daily love to walk,
Of him my soul delights to talk ;
On him I cast my every care,
Like him one day I shall appear.

Bless him, my soul, from day to day ;
Trust him to bring thee on thy way ;
Give him thy poor, weak, sinful heart ;
With him, oh never, never part.

Take him for strength and righteousness ;
Make him thy refuge in distress ;
Love him above all earthly joy,
And him in everything employ.

Praise him in cheerful, grateful songs,
To *him* the highest praise belongs ;
To him who does your heaven prepare,
And him you'll praise for ever there.

LETTER XII.

It is a good thing⁴ often to think and speak of our fathers' sepulchres; not their estates, or honours only, but their tombs, where they are gone, and how employed, and what becomes of their bodies, and how quickly we shall go to them. The grave is the inheritance of all their children.—*Rev. Job Orton.*

Recollect your illustrious forefathers, the noble host of the first Protestant Nonconformists. Blessed is their memory. But ah! where is their *spirit*? Oh for the heart of those Noahs, Daniels, and Jobs! Where is the Lord God of Elijah? When shall our zeal, our faith, our purity, our charity, emulate theirs?—*Dr. J. Pye Smith.*

WHEN Mr. Macaulay called the Puritans the most remarkable body of men perhaps which the world has ever produced, none who are competent to judge will find fault with him. They really were so. They were alike remarkable for learning and piety. Dr. Watts, therefore, in his "Humble Attempt," mentions them with honour; and Dr. Winter, in the discourse at Dr. Burder's ordination, already quoted, proposed them for imitation. What Nazianzen said of John the Baptist, that

he was *all voice*, and which was well applied to Dr. Samuel Bolton, and the Rev. Thomas Wilson, of Maidstone, may be said of the Puritans and Nonconformists generally; *they* were all voice; a voice in their habits, a voice in their diet, a voice in their conversation as well as their preaching, a voice in their dwellings. Their lives—to borrow John Howe's happy phrase, in his funeral sermon for Queen Mary—were “transacted under the government of religion.”

Was your curiosity never stirred as to their daily movements? their houses? their retirement, of which many were so fond? their conversation and fire-side occupations and enjoyments? At meals they usually unbent themselves, and many of them were then comical and facetious; but nevertheless, making any public or local tidings, as talked over, the subject of subsequent prayer or praise.

Has your fancy never pictured the venerable men in their privacy,* enjoying a quiet pipe, cultivating their gardens and fields with holy cheerfulness, and happy, too, in their families and flocks, though hated by the world, frowned upon by the haughty, and often persecuted with the blindest fury? How did they delight, like

* See Note L.

Thomas à Kempis, in "little corners and little books !" Several of them are represented with a volume in one hand.

Some of their "Lives" make us acquainted with their personal appearance. It is the case with John Bunyan. But, as in Scripture biography, particulars respecting them are few. There were no Boswells in those days ; or, if there were, their memorials have perished. In Firmin's "Real Christian" there are some anecdotes ; and Dunton's medley, entitled, his "Life and Errors," contains many sketches, and so graphic as to make the want of others an affliction.

In Milton's letters you get hints as to his tastes, and some idea of his associates. They are far too slight, however, for satisfying desire. One written from Cambridge, July 21, 1628, to the Rev. Thomas Young, an Essex Puritan, is all I can afford. "Having an invitation into your part of the country in the spring, I shall readily accept it, that I may enjoy the deliciousness of the season, as well as that of your conversation, and that I may withdraw myself, for a short time, from the tumult of the city to your rural mansion, as to the renowned Portico of Zeno, or Tusculum of Tully, where you live on your little farm, with a moderate fortune, but a princely mind ; and where you practise the contempt and triumph

over the temptations of ambition, pomp, luxury, and all that follows the chariot of fortune, or attracts the gaze and admiration of the thoughtless multitude."

The engraved portraits of some of the old Puritans and Nonconformists are of little worth. Those by Hollar, Marshall, Faithorne, Vertue, and Robert White were probably faithful. But there are such outward lineaments given, occasionally by contemporary *pens*, as, whenever you meet with them, deserve regard. For instance, the learned Gataker, who, like others of his brethren, resisted every importunity to be "taken," was, we are told, of a middle stature, a thin body, a lively countenance, a fresh complexion, and grey betimes. Mr. Angier was handsome, though low in stature, of a clear complexion, red and white; very graceful, venerable, and pleasant. Joseph Alleine was tall and erect, and his countenance the seat of cheerfulness, gravity, and love. Paul Bayne had such a heavenly majesty as to produce awe. John Howe was tall: his eye piercing but pleasant, his aspect indicated something uncommonly great, and tended to excite veneration.

The apparel of the Puritans and Nonconformists was plain and decent. Their dwellings, too, oftentimes, as well as their countenances, gained them respect. Philip Henry was known for

neatness about his house and ground: and Oliver Heywood says, his father-in-law, Mr. Angier, (between whom and Mr. Henry there was a strong resemblance,) so loved the same good habit as to shame some out of slovenliness by friendly rebukes. Those good men thought that cleanliness may be preserved even in rags.

In funeral sermons, a large, though defective, list of which is given in the Congregational Magazine for January, 1830; and in the Martyrology of John Fox; the writings of Samuel Clarke and Neal; Drs. Calamy and Mather; Dr. Gillies; Drs. Bogue and Bennett; Walter Wilson; B. Hanbury; and B. Brook, you have the sarcophagi of Puritans and Nonconformists. To these, however, must be added, Howie's "Scots Worthies," and Mr. Matthias Morrice's "Acts and Monuments of Mercy." Also, an "Abstract of the Gracious Dealings of God with several eminent Christians," a small volume, taken from authentic manuscripts, and published "for the comfort and establishment of serious minds," by the Rev. Samuel James. In 1805, the eighth edition appeared, with considerable additions, and some account of the author, by his son, whom I knew. And, likewise, *Select Nonconformist Remains*, being original sermons of Oliver Heywood,

Thomas Jollie,* H. Newcome, and H. Pendlebury, selected from manuscripts, with memoirs of the authors, compiled mostly from their private papers, by the Rev. Richard Slate; together with *Memoirs of private Christians*, by the Rev. John Brown, of Whitburn; *Memorials of Christian Friendship*, by Isaac Mann, A.M.; and *Brief Memorials of Departed Saints*, by the Rev. J. M. Chapman.

Besides often wandering among those tombs, you will, as your acquaintance with Nonconforming worthies increases, search out the scenes of their earthly abode, visiting them as the poet Pollok did Lockgoin, the haunt of the Covenanters. You will keep in mind their manuscripts and portraitures, as well as the treatises† and sermons which have rendered many of them immortal. You will understand why it was that the Rev. John Machin, who was converted to God by the preaching of Dr. Hill, at Cambridge, would show his friends the seat in which he sat, and tell them how he loved the

* See ante page 34, note.

† How has Foster, in the beginning of his "Introductory Essay" to Dr. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," worked out the associations which sometimes suggest themselves to the thoughtful, as to authors: books: former readers: or marks indicative of an attentive perusal!

sight of it, and that he always preferred sitting there if possible : why it was, that the Rev. R. Young, of Jedburgh, felt what no words can describe in writing the memoirs of Mr. Shanks, his predecessor, *in that study* where the greatest part of the life of that eloquent man was spent, and where those spiritual feasts were prepared which cheered and edified multitudes ; why it was, that Dr. Watts covered those places in his study where there were no shelves with prints, mostly of divines ; and why the famous John Cotton, having derived benefit from Dr. Sibbs, placed a portrait of that renowned divine in a part of his house where he might oftenest look upon it. You will cease to wonder that the Rev. C. Buck, when at Banbury, should have had the curiosity mentioned in his *Life*, by Dr. Styles, to visit the village of Hanwell, because the residence first of John Dod, and afterwards of Dr. Robert Harris. Or how it is, that an ascent of our neighbouring hill, the Wrekin, so reminds us of the illustrious Baxter ;* or that some feel special delight in Bunhill Fields ; or Red Cross Street Library ; or at Broad Oak, the residence of Philip Henry ; or in the quarry walk at Shrewsbury, where Dr. Doddridge took daily exercise while on

* See Note M.

a visit to Job Orton : or when standing in Baxter's pulpit at Kidderminster ; or Matthew Henry's at Chester.

Baxter has not concealed his joy when at Bexley Abbey, in Kent, he saw, upon the red stone wall in the garden, a summer-house inscribed to Mr. George Sandys, who retired to *that spot* for poetry and contemplation. And a "working clergyman," in the "Life-Book of a Labourer," has furnished a specimen of similar gladness, in a chapter entitled, "Arnsby and Robert Hall." A pilgrimage is there narrated to the birth-place, dwelling,* and grave of that admirable Baptist minister, who, though comparatively little known, was neither less pious nor less talented than his son, the great orator who bore his name.

That principle of our nature which induces such emotions is so true, that I question if a Christian acquainted with the Life of "Master" Carter, a Puritan, who died in 1634, could visit Belsted, near Ipswich, and not linger over it, in spite of Dr. Echard's vulgar sneer, as the "Tusculanum" of that holy man—where he had "communion with God in the church, the house, and the fields." Nor is the principle devoid of

* See Note N.

what is useful, notwithstanding its gross abuses as pointed out in Calvin's impressive tract. Dr. Davidson, in the fifteenth chapter of his "Sacred Hermeneutics," has dilated upon it with great pathos and eloquence: Mr. Jay, in his Evening Exercises—for August 4th—makes the subject thrill; but never was it exhibited with more touching brevity than by Shakspeare. He places us, in imagination, among the very fields of Palestine,

— Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet
Which eighteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage to the bitter cross.

Even granting that the main thing which governed the patriarch Jacob was faith in the Divine promise, that Canaan should be the inheritance of his seed, and a desire for his sons to fix their hearts upon it as such: yet was there nothing of the feeling alluded to, when he charged them, and said unto them, "I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite; in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. *There they buried Abraham, and Sarah*

his wife, there they buried Isaac, and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah?"

How was Professor Halyburton refreshed on his dying bed by similar sensibility! "I was just thinking," he once said, "on the pleasant spot of earth that I will get to lie in, beside Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Forester, Professor Anderson, &c., and I will come in as the little one among them, and I will get my pleasant George"—a deceased son—"in my hand, and oh, we will be a knot of comely dust!"

It is the power of association, thus noticed, that has led many to behold with other eyes than those of scientific curiosity and inquisitiveness, the world itself; to muse upon it, not only as the stage upon which the great work of redemption was transacted, and as the temporary abode of the righteous, but as destined to be burned up.

Preparation for that solemnity may be said to have betokened the Puritans and Nonconformists as a body; and Dr. Theophilus Gale wrote upon it, in a "Discourse of Christ's Coming;" as did Mr. Thomas Vincent, in his "Christ's Certain and Sudden Appearance to Judgment," a book much esteemed by Mrs. Savage.

LETTER XIII.

An eminent minister, Mr. Wilson, of Warwick, before he undertook a public charge chose to spend some time in the family of the excellent Philip Henry, saying, that he desired to learn Mr. Henry's way of preaching, and praying, and living. "If God," said he, "will give me his spirit, I shall be a happy man."—*Rev. Wm. Tong.*

They were "holy men of God, who were good in the pulpit, and in the house too, and in all places, in all companies; against whom there could be no exception, save in the matter of their God, abating them for those natural human infirmities, which are inseparable from the most holy persons whilst on this side of perfection, tabernacling in houses of clay."—*Rev. Samuel Slater.*

ONE of the characteristics of the early Puritans and Nonconformists, as you saw in the tenth of the former Letters, was their studiousness; and you will remember how, by early rising, time was redeemed for its indulgence; a habit which Dr. Chandler, and many others, have recommended, both for getting knowledge and preserving health. It was a common speech of

Mr. Matthew Henry's—"If you would do the work of a day, do not lose the morning."*

The results are yet visible in lengthy manuscripts and numberless publications. Instead of the instances of diligence before given being uncommon, they might be increased almost indefinitely. The Puritan minister at St. Alkmond, Shrewsbury, Mr. Herring, was often willing to miss a meal that he might converse with his books. It was the delight of Mr. Whitaker, of Leeds, to be in his large and well-chosen library. And Mr. John Norton, if he felt not much inclined to study, took occasion to "reflect upon his heart and ways, lest some unobserved sin should provoke the Lord to give him up to a slothful, listless frame of spirit."

That "very humble, plain, honest, loving, free, liberal, charitable, and compassionate" Puritan, Mr. Bradshaw, was seldom seen abroad without a book, and reading too, usually, if alone, though he "walked somewhat fast." The Rev. John Ashe read on horseback as well as on foot, and sometimes so intently as to lose his way. Dr. Gouge, when attending the Westminster Assembly, had his Bible and other volumes constantly with him, that during any intermission of business not a moment might be lost.

* Orig. MS.

This habit was the more important, because many of the excellent men in question, when forbidden to preach, received young scholars into their houses, whom they instructed in sound literature and Christian doctrine. They delivered expositions to them ; they often and periodically prayed and read with them ; they roused them from the “ bed of sloth ;” and enforced application to study.

Thus originated the Dissenting academies. How they were conducted is no secret. Archbishop Secker and the Bishop of Durham—Butler, who wrote the *Analogy*—were educated at that over which the learned Samuel Jones presided. You may see a letter of Secker’s, giving an account of it, and his own pursuits, in Milner’s *Life of Watts*, and in the “ *History of Dissenters*.” The latter work contains an admirable account of our “ seminaries,” and of many of the tutors.

You recollect how Baxter, in his Preface to *Janeway’s Life*, endeavours to quell fear, lest literary diligence should destroy health. He argued, as Lord Bacon did before him, that, other things being equal, “ studies tend to long life,” and, is it not by negligence as to air, exercise, and diet ; by excess in application ; and unseasonableness as to time ; not to mention inordinate sitting ; in short, acting as slaves instead of servants,

that so much mischief is done? Just as by intemperance of any other kind! Was it not a wise rule of that great Protestant, and, in principle, thorough Puritan—Philip de Mornay, Lord of Plessis—not to encroach, even when he read fourteen hours a day, upon the natural hours of repose? Mr. Davenport, and Dr. Whitaker, and Dr. Owen, would have parted with all their acquisitions by late hours, could they have recovered the health lost by them.

Philip Henry was a ripe scholar, and liked to see scholars “busy;” but “health and strength,” he said, “must be considered, and nothing done to over drive.” Upon this rule he acted himself, making up for length of time by closeness of attention. Mrs. Savage, in her papers, represents him as so absorbed with Camden’s *Annals of Queen Elizabeth*, as to have been unobservant of what passed around him; like Dr. Chaderton, a Puritan of great name, who, when his old servant went to see him a little before his death, was so diligently reading, and without spectacles, though more than ninety years of age, that, at first, he took no notice of her.

The Broad Oak family were insatiable readers; and a catalogue of the library, as full as that of Oliver Heywood’s, in the seventeenth volume of the *Congregational Magazine*, would be invaluable;

but it is to be wished for, I fear, in vain. That the shelves were well filled there can be no doubt. And Mrs. Tylston, in a manuscript letter now before me, to her "dearest brother" Matthew, then at Gray's Inn, observes, that what she and her sisters wanted, was not good books, but time and a heart to use those they had well. She, however, expresses in the same epistle, her desire "to have some *not* there bought in London;" adding, "I know you are often conversant in the bookseller's shop, a place I should love if I were as you are."

In the choice of books they evinced great care. The Rev. John Clayton's sentiments in his sermon on the danger of reading such as are improper, would exactly have met their taste. We are told, that Mr. Richard Heywood got the *best*: "the most plain, practical, and experimental treatises in divinity; such as Calvin, Luther, Perkins, Preston, and Sibbs."

It is almost certain that the laity, especially, usually studied the same book often, rather than sought variety. Indeed that Puritan gentleman, Mr. Jurdain, of Exeter, enamoured of Fox's Martyrology, read it seven times.* Mr. Dunton says,

* But see Dr. Owen on the Hebrews, vol. vii. p. 241.

his wife felt such interest in Howe's "Blessedness of the Righteous," as to go six times through it. And the biographer of Mr. Samuel Say notices the *perpetual* pleasure he found in Milton—his favourite author. Mr. Paul Bayne advised rather to let one or two be read well, and often, than many slightly. It is likely that no work thought worth perusal was dismissed before it had been gone through thrice. Mr. Holland, the publisher of Mr. Greenham's collected labours, tells us, in his address, dated 24th Nov. 1600, that he remembered a good aged knight, Sir Edward Maunsel, "a true-hearted professor of the Gospel, sixteen or seventeen years past," (this would be before the publication of Lord Bacon's Essays,) saying, that he "read a book the first time to see and like; the second time to note, and observe both method and matter; the third time to carry away and make use."

Many of our forefathers made marks as they read. This was the case with Mr. Baxter, Dr. Samuel Winter, and Mr. Trosse; and so it was with Ralph Erskine, Dr. Doddridge, and President Edwards; and some of them, like Perkins and Baxter, went through volumes with amazing speed. Watts abridged, and copied extracts. President Edwards wrote a great deal, carrying his pen and

ink with him. Mr. Pomfret so secured *his* thoughts "by night as well as by day, when travelling on the road, and in the house of his friends." And the late Rev. J. Thorowgood of Bocking, who knew no luxury so great as a book, often retired to a nobleman's park, and there spent many a summer's day, admiring the beauties of nature, reading the classic page, and meditating on heavenly truth. The author of the "Fourfold State," when writing Latin, read Cicero.

But, whatever their plan was, they subjected their minds, which were habitually reflective, to discipline. Their industry was immense. Like the bee, and with the same persevering activity, they were always collecting, and adding to their stores.

Whenever Flavel heard any remarkable passage in private conference, he would, if familiar with the relator, desire him to repeat it again, and then insert it in his *Adversaria*. So it was, probably, with his brethren. I can speak to common-place books kept by Philip Henry and Matthew Henry; and also that of the Rev. Samuel Clifford, who was ejected from Knoyle, in Wiltshire, it being in my possession. Mr. Clifford's, and one of Mr. P. Henry's, was kept upon the plan adopted by Mr. Hildersham; namely, a reference to the most observable things, by a mere note of volume and

page. Others, as Dr. Gouge and Matthew Newcomen, used an interleaved Bible, in which they wrote short and pithy interpretations.

Mr. Sheppard advised students to be much in meditation; and many of his brethren not only abounded in the exercise, but redeemed their very walking time in the streets for the purpose, just as John Bradford the martyr did the moments spent at his meals: *he* used to meditate in the midst of dinner with his hat on his eyes.

Dr. Preston laid it down as a maxim, that the greatest musers are the best artists; and Mr. Halyburton observed of himself, that he improved more by thinking than reading. *Remember*, says Mr. Brooks, in one of the introductions to his "Precious Remedies," "it is not hasty reading, but serious meditating upon holy and heavenly truths that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not he that reads most, but he that *meditates* most that will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest Christian."

With the fruits of their patient toil, we may, happily, be familiar, although little remains to gratify curiosity, as to the mode of production. With few exceptions—Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* for instance—we know next to nothing on that subject. John Goodwin tells us indeed, and Mr. Jackson quotes it in his *Life of the good man*,

that in composition he was remarkably slow. Hence he performed less in the way of authorship than many of his contemporaries ; but what he did, though smaller in bulk, was generally better expressed. Dr. John Owen, on the contrary, composed with great facility. *He* says that his Vindication of the treatise about the True Nature of Schism, a good-sized octavo, was “ the product (through the grace of Him who supplieth seed to the sower) of the spare hours of four or five days.” Baxter also composed with extraordinary quickness. He shows that in less than six months, and those full of pain and anguish, he penned the “ Saints’ Rest,” a quarto of more than eight hundred pages. Dr. Edward Williams informed me that he wrote his “ Defence of Modern Calvinism,” containing an examination of the Bishop of Lincoln’s “ Refutation,” in three months, after supper, namely, between nine and eleven at night.

But while you admire such diligence, and skill too, and have reason to rejoice in both, you will do the heavenly-minded men, and the grace of God in them also, injustice, if you confine your admiration to these yet visible monuments. You should consider their closets, and imagine what passed *there*, when no human eye beheld them.

From such lives as Dr. Cotton Mather’s, and

Dr. Doddridge's, from Baxter's "Converse with God in Solitude," his "Dying Thoughts," and "Saints' Rest ;" from Oliver Heywood's "Closet Prayer ;" and Bennett's "Christian Oratory," you may judge a little ; but only a little.

You may learn, however, how necessary it is to "be careful *about* secret communion ;" how, as that is "kept up, the soul prospers ;" and you learn, likewise, the constancy of the approaches of our spiritual nobles to God their King ; their reverence* for, and humble converse and fellowship with him ; their stated exercises of praise ; their contemplation of the "promises" and heaven ; their self-communings and examinations ; their establishment and growth in grace ; their efforts after clearer knowledge, and progress in sanctification ; their delightful enjoyments, and increasing faith.

It has been stated† how they excelled in public prayer. And was their superiority less as to

* "Some holy Nonconformists I have known, that would rarely name God but with their hats put off, or bowing their heads : or with hands and eyes lift up towards heaven. Old Mr. Atkins, at Tipton, near Dudley, did thus use to show such reverence when he named God, that would strike reverence into those that saw and heard him : and hath oft affected *me* more than a sermon."—Baxter against Schism, 2nd part, p. 5, 4to. 1684.

† See ante, p. 69.

closet, ejaculatory, conjugal, family, and social prayer? The service, verily, was one for which their souls seem never to have been out of tune. Feeling their need of Divine influence, their dependence upon it every moment, prayer was their resource and their delight. They lived in its spirit. It is told of Mr. Case, that from a child of six years to an aged man of eighty-four, he kept a continued, uninterrupted course of supplication; and of Mr. Benn, that he prayed in his study seven times a day. They experienced it to be, as Mrs. Savage often represents it in her diary, "heart's ease." It relieved their cares, it lulled their sorrows, and was their stay in all their labours. Have not many of them left it upon record, that the more they abounded in it the happier, the more prosperous, and the more useful they were? Dr. Doddridge remarked, in his "Charge" at the ordination of Mr. Jennings, that, "as prayer is the food and breath of all practical religion, so *secret* prayer, in particular, is of vast importance." "I verily believe," is his language, "that if a man were to keep a particular and accurate journal of his own heart but for one month, he would find as real and exact a correspondence between the temper of his soul at seasons of secret devotion, and in other parts

of his life, as we find between the changes of the barometer and the weather."

Dr. Watts, also, in a matchless delineation of the "Hidden Life of a Christian," sets the matter in a strong light; as did Dr. Collinges, in his discourse at the funeral, in the year 1659, of Lady Katherine Courten. That "right honourable" woman was "*much* in prayer, much in tears, much in reading the Holy Scriptures, in reading good books, and notes of sermons which herself had taken, and, as we could judge by her discourse, much in the application of what she read to her own soul, and examining her heart by them."

Christians then *studied* the Scriptures. It was the practice of Mr. John Rowe, of Crediton, to peruse them every morning with a commentary, especially Calvin's Exposition. And the Rev. Ezekiel Culverwell tells you his resolve to spend five hours every day in searching the holy book, and perusing tracts and commentaries.*

Some of the Puritans, like Dr. Gouge, who tied himself to fifteen chapters daily, had the Bible thoroughly impressed upon their memories. Scarcely a passage could be mentioned to Mr. Fairclough which he was not able to verify, both

* See his "Time Well Spent," p. 321, 12mo. 1634.

by chapter and verse. Dr. Guyse says of the Rev. John Hubbard, a Nonconformist of the eighteenth century, that his acquaintance with the Old and New Testament was so familiar and extensive, as to supersede the use of a concordance.

Nor was this regard to God's word the effect of mere curiosity. It is true the Puritans and Nonconformists were inquisitive; and they diligently collected their thoughts when they opened the inspired volume; but their reading was devotional; their object was edification; to know the Divine will; to obtain heavenly food; and, in the sense of the writer of the Apocalypse, they *ate*—thoroughly digested—the precious books.

While unfolding Scriptural sentiments, Dr. Watts expressed his own love to the Bible* in strains of great beauty; and they are no less applicable to his Nonconforming brethren, and their Puritanic predecessors than to himself. Can his verses † be too much admired, or too often thought upon? Do they not plainly show *why* it is that Nonconformists cherish the British and Foreign Bible Society? an institution which, though unknown to our forefathers, would have been most congenial to them, because of its sublime designs. It was, indeed, anticipated, in a degree,

* See Note O.

† Ibid.

by Thomas Gouge and some others of the "ejected."

It was this love to sacred truth, as "able to make" men "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," that led the Puritans and Nonconformists to pay such attention to their households; to *family* prayer; to catechising; to attendance upon public worship; and to the sanctification of God's blessed day.*

Their whole history shows a concern that each *house* should be, as Mr. Herbert Palmer's is said to have been, a school of religion. Some of their strongest expostulations are with those who little consider what a charge is committed to them when "settled;" and "what it is to bring up a child for God, and govern a family as a sanctified society." We are told that the family of Mr. Ralph Ward "was a well-ordered church;" and Mr. Matthew Henry entitled one of his best sermons, that on family religion,—"*A Church in the House.*"

They met as families, morning and evening, for reading the word of God; for a brief exposition of it; and for prayer: sometimes with, sometimes without, singing. Mr. Herring was accustomed, on such occasions, to enlarge "aptly and affec-

* See Note P.

tionately" upon the sermon lately heard, or the chapter read, by confession, complaint, thanksgiving, &c. Mr. Matthew Henry published his "Hymns, gathered mostly out of the best translations of David's Psalms," to promote singing in families.

Where there was no minister present, the master of the house, or, if he were absent or unwell, the mistress conducted the worship. Flavel, in his funeral sermon for "John Upton, Esq.," tells you how, sometimes, accidentally hearing that excellent man so engaged, he was edified, refreshed, and reprov'd by his "solidity of judgment, pertinency of expression, and holy warmth of affection." And Mrs. Savage, noticing her husband's indisposition by hoarseness one Sabbath day, says *she* did what she could, as God enabled her, with the family.*

Their times of meeting were fixed; and at night, early enough to prevent drowsiness. Mr. Cotton was short in domestic worship, accounting, as Mr. Dod, Mr. Bayne, and other "great saints" did before him, that tediousness was inconvenient. But, since the Lives of Mr. Blackerby, Mr. Philip Henry, and Mr. Angier abound in

* Diary, Orig. MS.

information on these topics, I will merely say, that you will find them fully handled, also, in that marvellous collection of sacred learning, the "Morning Exercises," now reprinted, and much increased in interest by the seasonable appearance of Mr. Dunn's "Memoirs of the Seventy-five eminent Divines" who preached them.

In Puritan and Nonconformist families the *servants*, in a spiritual sense at least, were important persons. Nor did anxiety for them cease when they either returned to their parents, or married, or changed their places of abode. Letters of counsel often followed them.

The *children*, as a matter of course, were still more cared for. In the conduct of Mr. Philip Henry and Mr. Angier, you have a fine example how it operated: how wakeful and constant was the oversight; and how soundly *religious* was the training; one ceaseless aim, in short, to fit "the holy seed" for God's service on earth, and in heaven.

Not only was prayer offered continually, but all that instruction, example, and influence could effect, was *done*. Mrs. Savage, mentioning the "enlargement" she felt in praying for her children, says, "If I know my own heart, *that* I desire for them is—not that they may be great,

but *good*. I have urged it with the Almighty thus—Thou hast taught *me* from my youth—teach mine.”*

A manuscript tract, drawn up by the learned Jonathan Hanmer, for his son’s use at Cambridge, was a sort of commentary upon the following distich :—

Rise, pray, then study, meditate, run, dine ;
Play, study, sup, think, pray, to rest resign.

And, in the copy I possess of a scarce volume by the Rev. Edward Lawrence, entitled, “Parents’ Groans over their Wicked Children,” thirteen blank pages are filled with instructions from a contemporary father to his “dear son.”

This theme may be illustrated to a great extent, from such books as Oliver Heywood’s “Youth’s Monitor ;” Thomas Gouge’s “Young Man’s Guide ;” Matthew Henry’s “Sober-mindedness,” pressed upon young people, and his “Pleasantness of a Religious Life ;” the Berry Street Lectures, which were published for the use of families ; and the Sermons addressed to the Young, by Dr. Doddridge and Mr. Lavington ; but I will confine your thoughts to two extracts from unpublished letters written by Mrs. Savage to her son when at school.

* Diary, Orig. MS.

In the one, dated January 15, 1713, she says, "Always remember that the manna, angels' food, was to be gathered only in the morning. Afterward it was melted, and not to be found. Be very careful to *begin* every day with God. Implore his presence and blessing, which alone will make all sweet and successful. I wish you would now begin again to read over the Bible. Observe something out of each chapter, and write it down."

The other, dated October 5, 1715, was written the year after the death of her eminent brother, the expositor. "I was yesterday at Nantwich. Mr. Mottershead had an excellent subject—Isa. xxxii. 17, 'The work of righteousness shall be peace,' &c. I believe you have not forgotten your dear uncle Henry's sermon on these words. You wrote the text, and doctrine,—that peace, and quietness, and everlasting assurance may be expected, and shall be found in the way and work of righteousness. Mr. Mottershead was to the same purpose. He mentioned your uncle by name, and his dying legacy—that a holy, heavenly life spent in the service of God, and communion with him, is the sweetest, and pleasantest, and most comfortable life any can live in this world. I hope you think so, and will act accordingly."

That promising youth did both; and in the

“Life” of his incomparable mother you see *his* “end;” and *her* exalted piety. “A sore breach this to us,” was one of her remarks upon his happy death, at near twenty-two years of age; “but now God has done his work, let us go and do ours.”

LETTER XIV.

Whenever I have set myself to form an idea of the primitive, apostolic spirit, from what has appeared of it in the good men of our age, none ever more readily occurred to my thoughts than Mr. Philip Henry and Mr. W.; Bagshaw.—*Rev. William Tong.*

The example—of the Puritans—shames our measured attainments, and invites us to a nobler career. Their names would stamp a dignity on any cause.—*Rev. John Ely.*

You would expect Puritans and Nonconformists to be observers of Providence. And they were so. Some of them, especially Flavel, Crane, Collinges, and Charnock, have provided the best help for the pleasant work. Nor will you overlook the “Fulfilling of Scripture,” by that catholic-spirited, noble-minded confessor, and very able writer, the Rev. Robert Fleming.

It was in this way; by a constant regard to God; by belief in his sovereignty and power; and the certainty of heaven as the final dwelling-place of righteous men, that their sorrows were so patiently borne; and the very enmity by which they were assailed made an occasion of benefit.

“Let the *hatred* you meet with in this world,” was the counsel of Philip Henry, “make you *long for the world of everlasting love*. There is none to hurt or destroy in all that holy mountain. There will be no sinners *there* to hate the saints, and no corruptions to make the saints hate one another.”*

Nor did their many sorrows merely quicken their steps thitherward; they heightened their admiration of the *love* which inflicted chastisement; they led them to *praise* the “profound wisdom,” the “infinite tenderness,” and the “incessant vigilancy” of Him that cannot err; and who, by his grace, rendered the “curse” in many respects a “blessing.” Was it not so in the imprisonment of Bunyan, Alleine, and Rutherford? The Pilgrim’s Progress of the one, and the Letters of the other, proclaim how entirely God’s thoughts are above our thoughts, how easily he brings to nought the “devices of the crafty,” and how he can, and often does, make even “the wrath of man to praise him.” Mrs. Savage, in a manuscript now before me, noticing that “her roots,” when young, “were watered with wine;” and that, perhaps, her dear father’s pains and care for his children were not to be paralleled; devoutly adds — “His being shut out of public work, which he

* From Mrs. Savage’s MS., April 30th, 1693.

had great ability for, was in itself a great judgment; yet how did God turn it to a great good to his family!"

Such observation of the "loving-kindness of the Lord," was co-extensive, in the case of our honoured progenitors, with the occurrences of life; and the quicksightedness it gave to their spiritual vision is always to be seen.

The better to foster so good a habit, it was their custom to keep a diary; and one of them, the Rev. John Beadle, wrote a volume to prove it the duty of a "thankful Christian" to do so, showing, at the same time, what it ought to be. Mr. Herbert Palmer made his a daily* journal, with a weekly survey, and memoranda upon the review. Mr. Thomas, the ejected from Ubleigh, in Somersetshire, reviewed his memoranda once a year; and his plan, with examples, is given most fully in Dr. Calamy's "Account." So are those of Mr. John Berry, whom Baxter describes as an "extraordinary, humble, tender-conscienced, serious, godly, able minister."

Mr. Steele being seized and searched, his almanac, which contained his diary, in hopes of finding something whereby to accuse him, was taken also. It was for the year 1665, and the writing

* "One day" of the "exact diary" of the Rev. John Murcot, is "instanced as a taste" in his rare life, entitled "Moses in the Mount," pp. 31—37. 4to. 1657.

not being very legible, malicious comments were made upon it. But we are informed that, in the estimation of all sober people, the document only discovered him to be a thrifty husband of his time, and a man who maintained a strict watch over his heart.

One of the most copious diaries is that of Oliver Heywood. He is more minute than the majority of his contemporaries. An instance occurs in the year 1685, one, you will recollect, of peculiar peril to Nonconformists. Philip Henry was *then* imprisoned; so was Baxter; so was Oliver Heywood. The latter was indicted for "a riotous assembly in his house, because he had preached the Gospel of peace to above four grown persons;" and, unable to pay the fine, and refusing to promise that he would desist from preaching, was committed to York Castle. There, however, he had the "delightful company" of good Mr. Whitaker, of Leeds, and his wife. He tells you how their time was spent. "After our rising we kneeled down, and I went to prayer with my wife. She in her closet, and I in the chamber, went to secret prayer alone. Then I read a chapter in the Greek Testament while I took a pipe. Then a chapter in the Old Testament with Poole's Annotations. Then wrote a little here (diary) or elsewhere. At ten o'clock I read a chapter, and went to prayer.

Then wrote in some book or treatise I was composing till dinner. After dinner Mr. Whitaker and I read in turn, for an hour, in Fox's Acts and Monuments of Martyrs, Latin edition. Then went to my chamber; if my wife were absent, I spent an hour in secret prayer, and God helped usually. After supper we read in the Book of Martyrs, studied, went to prayer, read in Baxter's Paraphrase on the New Testament."

Besides such memoranda, you become acquainted, in existing books and biographies, with many instructive "Rules" and "Resolutions" which often made a part of the diary of the good men who framed them. Mather's *Magnalia* perpetuates the "Sixty Memorials of a Godly Life" which guided John Rogers of Dedham; and in Corbet's "Self-employment;" the Memoirs of the Rev. James Fraser of Brea, of Dr. Doddridge, and President Edwards, of Dr. Bogue, and the Reverends James Moody, John Griffin, and my lamented friend Joseph Hughes, you see other patterns of the same kind. Nor can I omit referring you in this connexion to "A Brief Memoir of Mr. George Hall," from the pen of Dr. Pye Smith, but published anonymously; the Rev. Joseph Gilbert's very able Memoir of Dr. Williams: and the Life of Professor Halyburton, with an Introductory Essay by Dr. Young, of Perth.

The better to secure establishment in grace, the Puritans and Nonconformists often remembered how "the Lord their God had led them." They "considered the days of old;" they marked the past as well as the present, and they looked onward to the future. They "treasured up" their "experiences" and answers to their prayers. They compared different periods of their history, and observed the changes which time wrought on their minds and judgments. They calculated the amount of their spiritual gain or loss. They noticed and rejoiced in God's mercies. They mourned over their defects. And—they applied afresh to the "blood of sprinkling." Baxter has left us the result as to himself, in one of the most comprehensive and edifying statements ever written.*

Nor was this painstaking considerateness *confined* to such reminiscences. It extended especially to their reading; to their social intercourse; to their use of Christian ordinances; and the improvement, too, which they made of them.

Charnock was most "choice," Mr. Johnson tells us in the sermon at his funeral, "of the ministers he would *hear*; and of what he learned

* See Reliq. Baxter., pp. 124—138. Fol. 1696. Dr. Calamy's Abridgment, vol. i. pp. 394—399; or the Life, by Orme, pp. 379—390.

from books, converse, or sermons." That which affected and wrought most upon him he prayed over, till he was delivered into the form of it, and had Christ, grace, and the Spirit formed in him." He was only a specimen.

Do you wonder, then, at the maturity of Puritans and Nonconformists in the best knowledge? That for soundness of mind, solidity of judgment, and practical wisdom, they can be referred to as examples? Not only were they, as a body, free from "conceits and extravagances," from fits and starts in religion, but there was a beautiful symmetry in their views, experience, and conduct. Everything visionary, superstitious, speculative, or sentimental in religion, as well as what was bustling or morbid, or in any way affected its character as a "*reasonable service*," was ungrateful to them.

They considered each of the classes of evils thus alluded to, besides being far below the right "mark," as more likely to stifle, than to maintain, the "life of God in the soul." Mr. Tallents, who extolled "free grace, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us for our justification, and the operation of the Spirit in us for our sanctification;" and whose goodness Mr. Matthew Henry has immortalised, "sometimes expressed his fear concerning many weak, melancholy Christians, that they had tired themselves in the

exercises of devotion ; and would advise such to compose and quiet themselves, and keep their minds as calm and sedate as may be, and not aim to put them always upon the stretch. He would pleasantly say, The Quietists are the best Christians ; and that we must take heed of placing religion too much in the passions and pangs even of holy love ; for we truly honour and enjoy God, not only in the elevation of soul towards him, but the repose of the soul in him. Return to thy rest, O my soul, and be at home, be at ease in God."

There their own spirits *rested*, and the fact explains their habitual conduct. It regulated too their selection of society, which, as you may see by the second chapter of Swinnock's Christian Man's Calling, was esteemed a matter of great moment. It led them, moreover, to show what is meant by the communion of saints. Like Latimer, Cranmer, Ridley, and Bradford, when imprisoned, and famous Dr. Whitaker, Dr. Fulke, Dr. Chadderton, Mr. Dod, and other learned Puritans, when at Cambridge, they spent much time together in "brotherly conference, reading the Scriptures, and prayer ;" and, when separated, in intercession for each other with God, and fruitful letters. It is recorded in Mr. Philip Henry's papers, that on a time when he and Mr. Tallents,

and other neighbouring Nonconformists expected hinderance in their ministerial work, they spent *a whole night* at Wem rectory, consulting and praying together.

Nor were such interviews confined to ministers : Mr. Clark, best known as a biographer, alluding to his first congregation, at Shotwich, near Chester, notices that meetings were held, among that people, at the houses of the wealthiest in rotation ; questions, previously proposed by himself, were discussed ; and knowledge was increased. He says " he never was acquainted with more understanding Christians, though the best of them went in russet coats, and followed husbandry. Holy affections were kindled, and kept alive. Mutual love was promoted. So that all the professors of the Gospel living within ten or twelve miles asunder, were as intimate as if they had been of one household. The necessities of the poor being known, were provided for. The weak were strengthened, the mourning comforted, the erring reclaimed, the dejected raised, and all mutually edified in their holy faith. Moreover, they hereby enjoyed opportunities for private fasts, and days of thanksgivings, as there was occasion."

Such Christians could not *but* sympathise with and love one another. It is true, many of them

were poor, but they were "rich in faith." There were diversities of judgment, but they were one in Christ Jesus; and, though often scattered by persecution, as well as separated by distance, yet, expecting to meet in heaven, they allowed nothing to hinder their fellowship. Their test of value in a Christian was not great knowledge, or skill, or temporal prosperity; but faith, and love to God and man, especially the "disciples:" *all* that looked heavenward, though of a different persuasion. "It is one of my firmest principles," said that admirable Puritan Independent, Walter Cradock, when addressing the Commons' House of Parliament, "and by God's grace shall ever be my practice, to make union and communion with God my main work: to study peace with all men; to love, honour, receive saints *as saints*; to receive those whom Christ has received."

Some of the last sermons preached by the judicious Caryl, were on "the nature and practice" of *love* as the "end of the commandment;" and Dr. Owen prefaced them.

But the writings of Dr. Goodwin contain a passage on this subject, so becoming, and so evidential of the greatness of soul which distinguished that eminent Congregationalist, as to render any apology for its introduction needless. It occurs in his thirty-sixth sermon on the Epistle

to the Ephesians ; where, having tried to remove the narrowness of some as to a recognition by Christians of each other, differing in matters of church order and ministerial appointment, he says—"We should acknowledge every good thing in every man, in every church, in everything, and that is a way to work upon men, and to prevail with them, as it is Phile. 6. It is that which buildeth men up by the acknowledgment of every good thing that is in him."

"For my part," he proceeds—"this I say, and I say it with much integrity, I never yet took up religion by parties in the lump ; I have found by trial of things, that there is some truth on all sides. I have found holiness where you would little think it, and so, likewise, truth ; and I have learned this principle, which, I hope, I shall never lay down till I am swallowed up of immortality, and that is that which I have said before—to acknowledge every good thing, and hold communion with it, in men, in churches, or whatsoever else. I learn this from Paul, I learn this from Jesus Christ himself ; he *fillet* *all in all* ; he is in the hearts of his people, and fillet them in his ordinances to this day ; and when Jesus Christ fillet, why should we deny an acknowledgment, and a right hand of fellowship, and communion ?"

This is in perfect keeping with Dr. John

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Owen's sentiments, and with Dr. Calamy's representation in his "Brief and true Account of the Protestant Dissenters in England."* And was it not exemplified by the Rev. Henry Stubbs? *He* set apart some time every day, to pray for the church of God without the narrow distinction of this, or that, or the other party. How many more did the same it is impossible to tell; but there is enough to show that a spirit so good was not confined to a few.† Mr. Philip Henry used to say of himself, that he was too much a Catholic to be a *Roman* Catholic.

The Christian graces indeed, of that apostolic man, and his brethren generally, were brilliant. Mr. Livingstone declared concerning the Rev. Robert Cunningham, an Irish Puritan, that, of all the men he ever saw, he most resembled the meekness of Jesus Christ. Dr. Daniel Williams, though not in all things of the same judgment with Baxter, testified that no man he ever knew expressed so much of God's image as consisting in light, holiness, and love. And one who was competent to judge, and no flatterer, said of the never-to-be-forgotten Cornelius Winter, "that man is more like the image I have formed of Jesus Christ than any man I ever saw, or expect to see."

* See the Congreg. Mag. vol. xv. pp. 265—273.

† See Note Q.

Although Charnock was defamed, as if "melancholy, reserved, and unsociable," Mr. Johnson says—that his acquaintance would "give you a character of him diametrically opposite." "Where he *could* take delight, he won every heart by his cheerful, free, loving, and sweet disposition."

It is quite true, however, that in Mr. Charnock, and his brethren, there were the mien and dignity of men high born; of children of the "Most High;" who remembered that, wherever they went, they had "the company and presence of the all-holy God."* They were men too who, having their resources within themselves, coveted few associates.†

Many, as "Master" Capel, were naturally jocular. Others, Dr. Twiss and Matthew Poole, for instance, were witty, facetious, and apt at repartee. And while, as a body, they behaved with the "gravity, sincerity, and sound speech" which commend "believers," some, like John Howe, Dr. Bates, Philip Henry, and Mr. Tallents, were highly courteous and genteel.

Whately, in his "Prototypes," from the example of Abraham, enforces attention to a "lovely

* P. Henry, Orig. MS.

† See Job Orton's *Letters to a Young Clergyman*, vol. i. page 166, 2nd edition.

carriage" as strongly as Dr. Watts in his celebrated sermon on that subject. The truth is, they saw nothing in religion or the intercourse that is Christian, either to level appointed distinctions, to banish etiquette, or check politeness ; still less to sanction uncertain, lofty, or queer behaviour. They shunned "high looks," and a vain-glorious carriage, and numbered respectful, engaging manners, as well as loyalty, among the observances which advance the Divine glory. *That* was their "chief end."

Hence the vigilance of our forefathers not to remove what a Puritan genius—Mr. Herle—calls the "landmarks of sense;" their cool, considerate, and cautious wisdom; their orderly habits; their contentment, cheerfulness, and love of home; their fidelity and seriousness; their watchfulness over their thoughts and words; not only their dislike of censoriousness and detraction, and judging their fellow-men, but their catholic charity; their holy jealousy, meekness, and fear; their lowliness of mind, and readiness to yield; their modesty; their self-denial and magnanimity; their constancy; their care to "walk circumspectly;" to provide things honest; to avoid fierceness and offence; and to deal prudently. Who could be more exact and punctual

in money matters? And their integrity made it safe to depend upon them. They were also great observers of temperance: in many cases—as those of Milton and the “renowned” John Eliot—it amounted to abstemiousness. And withal, there was a universal frugality; but, and partly because of it, unceasing bountifulness, charity to the poor, kindness, and hospitality. At the same time everything was avoided that looked like ostentation. Dr. Harris used to say, “*Be more than you seem. Do more than you talk in religion.*” It is instructive to observe how feelingly Matthew Henry, in his funeral sermon for Mr. Samuel Laurence, alludes to the “pious zeal and strictness of the good old Puritans,” a phrase synonymous with that goodness which I have been exhibiting. How anxiously he seems to deplore any abatement of it! And he *knew* what it was. The venerable Mr. Calamy, who was ejected from Aldermanbury in London, knew it still better. And in the epistle dedicatory to his “*Godly Man’s Ark*,” when urging the avoidance, “as soul-poison,” of “all doctrines which hold forth a superstitious strictness *above* what is required in the word;” he urged also the avoidance of “apostacy from that humble and exact walking with God in all good

duties both towards God and man, which were the credit and honour of the *good old Puritan* in former days."

But since I can refer you to Rogers's "Seven Treatises," Scudder's "Christian's Daily Walk," Bolton's "Directions for comfortably Walking with God," Burroughs' "Heavenly Conversation," Bury's "Guide to Glory," the "Christian Morality" of Dr. Watts, and Dr. John Evans's sermons on the "Christian Temper," I need not enlarge. I will only add, therefore, that what John Dunton says of Dr. Jacomb was true of the Puritans and Nonconformists generally; that their sermons and lives were all of a piece. Religion had sovereign possession of their souls. They made it their one chief business; to do which, said Philip Henry, "is the very character of a Christian."*

That good man closed a sermon on lukewarmness by asking, "If you were sure to die to-morrow would you be no livelier to-day? If a damned soul were suffered to live again, how fervent would he be in religion!"†

Now it was that *fervency* of spirit which gave distinction to the eminent persons in question. And it told. It imparted to their piety an energy

* Orig. MS.

† Orig. MS.

which became infectious; and, notwithstanding their conduct stirred up reproach because it was godly, it won both admiration and respect. Conscience testified that the world was mistaken in its treatment of such men, and, like Bernard Gilpin, they were pronounced "saints" by their very enemies.

LETTER XV.

Enter into a serious consideration of *eternity*: the very thinking of it, will be of great moment to you.—*Dr. Preston.*

A wise man's, a true Christian man's *end* is to enjoy everlasting communion with God in the heavens, and he frames all his concerns to accomplish it.

We must look to die as we live.—*Dr. Sibbs.*

MRS. HULTON, the youngest daughter of Philip Henry, writing to her sister Mrs. Savage, says, in a manuscript letter now before me, "We make the death of others the matter of news, but do we by it *learn to die*?" A thought deepened, no doubt, by the solemnising truth, that man is appointed *once* to die: after this "the judgment."

To realise the subject; to urge the momentous importance of prompt attention to it, was what Puritans and Nonconformists aimed at. You see it in all they did, and all they wrote. Baxter closed his "Farewell Sermon" before the ejection

in 1662, with exhorting his hearers to make *this* learning the work of their lives.

And—nearly thirty years after, when standing upon the edge of the grave, the same devout man addressed visitors thus: “You come hither to learn to die. I am not the only person that must go this way. I can assure you that your whole life, be it never so long, is little enough to prepare for death. Have a care of this vain deceitful world, and the lusts of the flesh. Be sure you choose God for your portion, heaven for your home, God’s glory for your end, his word for your rule, and then you need never fear but we shall meet with comfort.”

That choice *he* had made; and so, when asked in his illness how he did, would reply, “Almost well.” His joy, Dr. Bates observes, was most remarkable when his own apprehension of death was nearest.

Nor was such felicity and composure amidst the approaches of the “king of terrors,” uncommon among our holy predecessors. Animated by immortal hopes, they triumphed in Christ; and very often had “a desire to depart” that they might be with him. “I am willing,” said Dr. Gouge, “to die, having, I bless God, nothing to do *but* to die.” “Death is no more to me,” was the language of the author of the

Christian Oratory, "than it is for a weary traveller, after a hard day's journey, to undress, and go to bed." Dr. Watts often blessed God, that he could lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether he awoke in this world or the next. And Mrs. Savage having met Mr. Tallents, at Nantwich, in the year 1693, noticed how full he was of "breathings after the heavenly glory; how much he was refreshed in the forethoughts of it."*

In Matthew Henry's sermon preached on occasion of that good man's death, with the "Short Account of his Life," you see how this was: that it was neither by chance nor of course, but resulted from living by *faith*; from close walking with God. John Howe's Treatise "Of Delighting in God," and his "Blessedness of the Righteous;" and Oliver Heywood's "Meetness for Heaven;" make it plain that those distinguished writers considered, with the apostle of the Gentiles,† a *life*, as Christians, the best preparation for dying. Hence they not only gave diligence to make their calling and election sure; but abounded "in the work of the Lord;" his "joy" became their "strength," and their "breathings" were after heaven. Death, too, as the conductor to

* Mrs. Savage, Diary, Orig. MS.

† Phil. i. 21.

that bliss, no longer appeared as an enemy, but a friend. The light in which they saw him quite altered his visage. What once was frightful, became inviting, and even lovely. They welcomed him as "their passage to *glory*;" as the "period of their sin and sorrow;"* as "a sovereign balm for every sore;"† and, therefore, as "gain."

Thus, whether looking at their own "departure," or sorrowing with a hopeful grief, for such as "slept," you see in them the power of a "good hope;" the loveliest admixture of tenderness and sobriety; an intense desire, as Mr. Matthew Henry often expressed it, to finish well; but freedom from all alarm. More than that—the humble fear, the calm repose, the holy dignity of "pure and undefiled religion." Looking directly "within the veil," they seem to have lost sight of other objects; the glare of the "world's trinity—riches, honours, and pleasures"‡—faded away from their vision as it does when man comes to die; and heaven, from habitual contemplation, became so near to their apprehensions as to fill them, oftentimes, with ineffable delight. They felt that they were *come* already to "Mount Sion;" they had sympathy with perfected spirits; they had fellow-

* Matt. Henry. Orig. MS.

† P. Henry,—from Matth. Henry's MS.

‡ Ibid.

ship with God through Christ ; they rejoiced, not in their *own* prospects only, but in the work the Saviour ever lives to carry on ; in each addition from the church below, to the “ general assembly ” above. “ I would not,” Mrs. Savage writes in one of her unpublished letters, “ look upon the death of Mrs. Hill as *evil* tidings, because I believe it was to her a happy change ; and it looks like a narrow spirit while we pray for the completing of Christ’s mystical body, to be grieved that any we love are joined to it.”

I have not, as you will have observed, dwelt upon the death-bed scenes of any of the excellent persons who have been brought before you. It is, indeed, of little importance comparatively, how or when they died. Besides, my chief object has been to show what they *were* ; their “ acts ” and “ goodness ;” * being “ confident of this very thing,” that those — the language is Jeremiah Dyke’s, in his “ Righteous Man’s Honour,” — who “ have *lived* God’s friends shall *die* God’s friends ; and God will be their friend in, at, and after death for ever.”

Such “ last scenes,” however, as *have* been noticed are fair samples of the many. Having thought much through life upon Him they loved,

* See 2 Chron. xxxii. 32.

the Puritans and Nonconformists had, commonly, "great peace" when "heart and flesh" failed. They felt satisfied, as Dr. Preston did, that they should change their place only, not their company; that they were going home—to "mansions in the skies." Some of them in full health, as well as when weak, or dying, had the most gladsome foretastes of everlasting bliss.

Dr. Doddridge, during his passage to Lisbon, where he shortly "put off" his "tabernacle," found the captain's cabin a Bethel—as "the house of God, and the gate of heaven." There, in an easy chair, he generally sat the greatest part of the day. He several times said to Mrs. Doddridge—I cannot tell you what a morning I have had. Such delightful and transporting views of the heavenly world is my Father now indulging me with, as no words can express. She observed that his very countenance often reminded her of his own beautiful hymn—

When death o'er nature shall prevail,
And all its pow'rs of language fail,
Joy through my swimming eyes shall break,
And *mean* the thanks I cannot speak.

But in Burnham's Pious Memorials you have a collection of the "holy triumphs" of believers, singularly adapted to quicken Christians; to console their spirits; and to deepen those impressions

of love and confidence, which the Scriptures inculcate towards Jesus—the great deliverer. *He* has “*abolished death*; and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

I will, nevertheless, ask you to “mark” with me, the “end” of both the venerable men whom Anthony Wood styled the Atlases and Pillars of Independency; and the rather, because Burnham notices only one of them. In heaven, as Dr. Watts exultingly observes in his discourse on the “Happiness of Separate Spirits,” “is a Goodwin *and* an Owen, who laid out the vigour of their inquiries in the glories and wonders of the person of Christ, his bloody sacrifice, his dying love, and his exalted station at the right hand of God. The first of these with a penetrating genius traced out many a new and uncommon thought, and made rich discoveries by digging in the mines of Scripture. The latter of them humbly pursued and confirmed Divine truth; and both of them were eminent in promoting faith and piety, spiritual peace and joy, upon the principles of grace and the Gospel.”

Dr. Goodwin was carried off by a rapid fever on the 23rd. February, 1679-80, in the eightieth year of his age; but he discoursed amidst its violence, with such strength of faith and assurance of Christ's love; with such admiration of free

grace ; with such joy in believing ; and such thanksgivings and praise, as extremely to affect all who heard him. He rejoiced to think he was dying ; and going to have full and uninterrupted communion with God. Alluding to the worthies mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, he said—" All these died in faith. I could not have imagined I should ever have had such a measure of faith in this hour. No ! I could never have imagined it. My bow abides in strength. Is Christ divided ? No ! I have the whole of his righteousness. I am found in him, not in my own righteousness which is of the law, but in the righteousness which is of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ who loved me, and gave himself for me. Christ cannot love me better than he doth. I think I cannot love Christ better than I do. I am swallowed up in God."

On the 24th August, 1683, Dr. John Owen entered into rest. That morning, Mr. Payne, an eminent tutor and Dissenting minister at Saffron Walden, to whom he had entrusted his " Meditations on the Glory of Christ,"* called to take his leave, and to inform him that he had just been putting them to the press. " I am glad to hear

* The last work the Doctor wrote. In the Preface you have his " Dying Thoughts." And see the Evan. Mag. for May, 1828.

it," said the expiring saint; and lifting up his hands, and eyes, exclaimed,—“ But oh, brother Payne! the long wished-for day is come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done, or was capable of doing, in this world !”

LETTER XVI.

A great part of the world is made to believe, that the Nonconformists are not fit to be employed in the church, nor trusted by the state. But what they *are* God knoweth, and the world may know, if they please to consult *their writings*, and to examine their *declaration* of their tenets; they are not to them that know them what they are reported by and to them that know them not.—*The Conformists' Plea for the Nonconformists*, A.D. 1683.

For my own part, methinks I find something in the *writings* of the divines of the last age so serious and savoury; so spiritual and heavenly; so full of zeal for God, and so animating to my soul; that I am led to put a very high value upon them, notwithstanding their allowed want of those embellishments which may be peculiar to our own day, and which more modern authors abound with, often to the loss of the more substantial parts of divinity.—*Rev. Richard Pearsall*, A.D. 1737.

THE writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists, after all, give you their truest picture; and a library stored only with a moderate selection of them would supply an endless variety of the best instruction. Dr. Owen observed, in his

Address to the Reader of Scudder's "Christian's Daily Walk," that *there*, and in some other practical discourses of the worthy ministers of the age *past*, there was an "authority, and powerful evidence of truth, arising from a plain transferring of the sacred sense of Scripture in words and expressions, suited to the experience of gracious, honest, and humble souls," which would be in vain searched for in "the most accurate and adorned" treatises.

The "unearthly" Baxter, when dull and out of frame, read awhile, with prayer, in some such author as Sibbs, Hildersham, Dod, Perkins, Bolton, &c. Their devout sentiments warmed his heart, and helped him forward. And, expostulating, in the year 1688, with such as thought the silencing of Nonconformists for the church's interest, he drew their attention to the *doctrine* preached by the objects of their aversion, and asked, "Whether it deserved hatred and destruction?" They may see it—(the passage is in his Address prefixed to Mr. Sylvester's sermon on being "for ever with the Lord")—"in the writings of Mr. Anthony Burgess, Mr. Richard and Joseph Alleine, Dr. Manton, Mr. Charnock, and many more, to pass by the living."

He tells us that, of the books he wrote himself, those he perused most frequently "for the use of

his own soul in its daily work," were, his "Life of Faith," treatise on "Self-denial," and the last part of the "Saints' Rest."

When any consulted Dr. Robert Harris about writers, he would ask, what they aimed at? For acuteness, he commended "Master" Bayne, Dr. Ames, John Ball, Capel, &c. For the spiritual part of divinity, Dr. Sibbs. For the rational, Dr. Preston. As solid preachers, he much prized "Master" Randall, "Master" Hildersham, Dr. Rainolds, &c. And for *all* a preacher's requisites—method, matter, elocution, and pronunciation—he would say, he seldom met with an abler man than his brother Whately, of Banbury.

White, in his "Power of Godliness," mentions, among the means and helps for acquiring that greatest prize, the following books—Shepard's "Sincere Convert" and "Sound Believer;" Scudder's "Christian's Daily Walk;" Sibbs' "Bruised Reed" and "Soul's Conflict;" Symond's "Deserted Soul's Case and Cure;" the "Confession of Faith," and larger and shorter "Catechisms" of the Assembly of Divines; all Dr. Preston's works;* "that solid, orthodox,

* I heard Dr. Edward Williams speak of Dr. Preston's "New Covenant, or Saints' Portion," as one of the best works he knew.

spiritual" book, Anthony Burgess's "Spiritual Refining;" but, especially, Hildersham on the fifty-first Psalm, and fourth of John; Baxter's "Saints' Rest;" and "a small, rational, spiritual, searching, and very eminent book," called Pinke's "Trial of our Sincere Love to Christ."

Mr. Gervase Disney says, in some "heads of advice," framed for the use of his wife, "Be much in reading, and studying good books. These I commend to thee especially, the Holy Bible, with Poole's 'Annotations,' Swinnock's 'One Cast for Eternity,' Barrett's 'Christian Temper,' Heywood's 'Heart Treasure,' Reyner's 'Precepts,' Dunton's 'Heavenly Pastime,' Case's 'God's Waiting to be Gracious,' Flavel's 'Fountain of Life,' Bolton's 'Tossed Ship,' Richard Alleine's 'Rebuke to Backsliders,' Janeway's 'Heaven upon Earth,' Swinnock's 'Regeneration,' Love on 'Heaven's Glory,' &c., Flavel's 'Saint Indeed,' Steele on 'Uprighteousness,' Calamy's 'Godly Man's Ark,' Hooker's 'Doubting Soul,' &c., Hardcastle's 'Christian Geography,' Watson on 'Contentment,' Mead's 'Almost Christian,' Doolittle on the 'Sacrament,' and his 'Call to Delaying Sinners.' Most of Bunyan's works very useful, if read without prejudice."

Mr. Steele, in his "Husbandman's Calling,"

recommends the Christian farmer to "purchase some *choice* books, and read them well. In the first place," is his counsel, "let not your house, nor any of your grown children, be without a Bible. Though other books have much of heaven in them, this book is all heaven; and it is as unfit to be without *this* in your house as to be without a fire, or without your household bread." He afterwards names Shepard's "Sound Believer," Mr. Alleine's first part of the "Vindication of Godliness," and Mr. Dod on the "Commandments," to help "in inside, practical holiness."

If you add to the foregoing volumes the writings of Mr. Greenham, Mr. Hieron, Ezekiel Culverwell, Daniel Dyke, Jeremiah Dyke, Doctors Gouge, Taylor, Owen, Bates, Manton, Jacomb, and Goodwin; John Howe, Charnock, Clarkson, Ambrose, Shaw, Matthew Henry, Watts, and Doddridge, you will have a fair sample of Puritanic and Nonconformist teaching. And it will be well to heed how uniformly it aims at the reader's highest welfare. Instead of handling the Gospel as though it embraced but some one idea; or consisted in ringing changes upon the *name* of Christ; or leading us to suppose that religion consists in controversy, or theological maxims and propositions; or in veneration for antiquated

opinions because antiquated, though unsanctioned by the inspired volume; or in any externals,—in forms, and ceremonies, and genuflexions, and calendar observances, and sacramental nostrums; or in some worldly episcopate; in short, in subjection to the authority of *men*, whom the great and good Mr. Cotton used to say, “are all church and no Christ,” it shows that religion consists, as before explained,* in that which is inward, spiritual, personal, and practical.

This agrees with the “lively oracles;” to enforce which was the one design of these Christian men. And thus great breadth was given to their instructions; they comprised doctrines *and* discipline, faith *and* practice, comfort *and* obligation, prayer *and* effort, as well as knowledge and praise, precious privileges and sacred triumphs. “Taught of God,” they held “fast the faithful word,” and proclaimed it fearlessly, whether men would “hear” or whether they would “forbear.” Hence the weight their writings carry. Take Charnock’s, and Howe’s, and Manton’s, and Flavel’s, and Bates’s, and Clarkson’s; or any of Dr. Owen’s treatises: say that on the Mortification of Sin in Believers, which Dean Milner thought his best

* See ante, Letter X. p. 89.

work : and you will soon know what is meant by "weight."

Hence, too, the adaptation of what they wrote to the condition of mankind. Instead of flattering any if "out of Christ," they dealt with them as the enemies of God ; as transgressors of his law ; as captives to ignorance, and prejudice, and sin, and Satan, and the world ; as exposed to righteous condemnation ; as needing, beyond all power of utterance, the Gospel salvation. "I know no mean," said Matthew Henry, "between godly and ungodly. *These divide the world.*"*

They viewed believers, also, in the same discovering light ; and their cases, as honouring their Father in heaven ; or backsliding in heart ; or "discouraged because of the way ;" or deluged with spiritual sorrows ; or dismayed by gloomy fears ; or strong or weak in faith, were fully met. The learned and eloquent Nathaniel Culverwell wrote his beautiful treatise on assurance, entitled, "The White Stone," for "*weak* believers especially." And you may refer to Dr. Sibbs' "Bruised Reed," and "Soul's Conflict ;" Whately's "Oil of Gladness ;" Ezekiel Culverwell's "Treatise of Faith, "applied especially to the use of the

* From Mrs. Savage's manuscript.

weakest Christians ;”* Symond’s “Case and Cure of a Deserted Soul ;” Timothy Rogers on “Trouble of Mind ;” Bolton’s Instructions for Comforting Afflicted Consciences ; Brooks’ “Unsearchable Riches ;” Sheffield’s “Rising Sun ;” and Baxter’s “Cure of Melancholy.” You there see with what considerate delicacy the circumstances of Christians are treated. Such, indeed, are the encouragements pointed out, such the display of Divine “pitifulness,” as to cheer the *most* disconsolate ; to stagger, if not to destroy, unbelief ; and to strengthen the feeblest traveller to heaven. The offices of the Redeemer, and his “gentleness,” are fully unfolded. Nor does the exhibition, notwithstanding a deficiency of refinement, less interest or animate the reader than Dr. Doddridge’s delightful sermons on the “Power and Grace of Christ ;” or the still later and very polished “Essays” of Mr. Sheppard. But let us not overlook here that most extraordinary of all extraordinary men—John Bunyan. Mr. Macaulay has felicitously remarked, that “religion has scarcely ever worn a form so calm and soothing as in the Pilgrim’s Progress. The feeling

* 12mo. 1648, 8th edit. Prefaced by Drs. Sibbs and Gouge. We are told that that excellent man, the Rev. John Richardson, “studied” it “over and over.” Noncon. Mem. vol. ii. p. 431. Oct. 1802.

which predominates through the whole book, is a feeling of tenderness for weak, timid, and harassed minds."

The truth is, as Whitefield, in his Recommendatory Preface to Bunyan's works, observed, it "smelled of the prison." "And ministers," added that experienced man, "never write or preach so well, as when under the cross. The spirit of Christ and of glory *then* rests upon them. It was this, no doubt, that made the Puritans of the last century such burning and shining lights. When cast out by the black Bartholomew Act, and driven from their respective charges to preach in barns and fields, in the highways and hedges, they, in an especial manner, wrote and preached as men having authority. Though dead, by their writings they yet speak; a peculiar unction attends them to this very hour."

It would, nevertheless, be unwise to deny, that some of the Puritan and Nonconformist authors have blemishes,* which require observation. Some, doubtless, were peculiar to the times; some arose from incorrectness of language on doctrinal subjects; others from contracted, imperfect, or partial views of truth, especially as to human account-

* Is not the confounding of Mary Magdalene with the woman that "was a sinner," mentioned in Luke vii. 37, of this description? See Dr. Lardner's Works, vol. x. p. 237, &c. Oct. 1827.

ability, the offer of mercy to all who hear the Gospel, and the moral government of God ; and others from vagueness, if not obscurity, of conception ; and so, a confounding of things that differ. To expose and cure such mistakes, Mr. Truman wrote upon "Natural and Moral Impotency," and the "Great Propitiation." And the books are well adapted to instruct ; to brace the mind ; and to counteract all overstrained constructions of Lutheran or Calvinian sentiments.

Even the treatises of John and Daniel Rogers, Thomas Hooker, and the New England Shepard, cannot be read without grave exceptions. For in those valuable writers, and others might be named, amidst much that is super-excellent, there are statements as to the "Constitution of a Christian," which look austere ; which, by checking the freeness of salvation, become, though contrary to intention, stumbling-blocks, and the occasion of mental trouble. Instead of at once directing sinners, as the apostles did, to the finished atonement, to the propitiatory work of Christ ; of urging them to take God at his word ; to receive the testimony given of his Son ; and so to possess "joy and peace" in *believing* ;* those good men

* "Preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and live by *faith* on him alone ; not upon frames, experiences, or duties ; and you will find strength, comfort, and holiness coming into your soul,

seem to have been infected with the ancient errors which confined evangelical teaching to the "initiated." They evidently thought a routine of tedious preparation needful before coming to the Saviour. Qualifications, therefore, unknown to the word of God were prescribed; and rules laid down which not merely concealed "great and precious promises," but savoured of a legal spirit, and kept out of view that death unto the law which is the "life of evangelical obedience."

You will find, too, in the writings of some of the Puritans and Nonconformists, such remarks upon faith itself—either mystifying it or confounding it with assurance; or upon seeking the glory of God's grace above our own salvation; or as to what should "follow Divine illumination;" or upon "fore-knowledge, will, and fate;" or upon millenarian notions about a personal reign, then again earnestly revived; as are far more likely to perplex than satisfy seekers after salvation; actually chafing the weary spirit, just as clouds and mists do, but more injuriously, the mountain traveller.

It was to rectify errors like those thus noticed, that Firmin wrote his "Real Christian," called

through the knowledge of him whom to know is life eternal."
—Rev. Samuel Pike, in a letter to the "Rev. Mr. Punfield, at Wimbourne, near Poole, in Dorsetshire." Sept. 29, 1759. The Orig. MS.

by Dr. Cotton Mather, not unfitly, a "golden" book. And in later times, may be mentioned, with strong commendation, as having a similar object, Mr. Hall of Arnsby's "Help to Zion's Travellers;" the elaborate productions of Dr. Edward Williams, Andrew Fuller, and Dr. Wardlaw; Mr. James's "Anxious Inquirer Directed;" Dr. Russell's "Letters," and "Tracts;" Dr. Payne's "Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, Election, the Atonement, Justification, and Regeneration;" and Dr. Urwick on the "Second Advent of Christ."

I am not disposed to deny that other faults may be specified. But they were comparatively harmless. They arose mainly from the writers being too systematic; from frequent digressions; from "complicated divisions, and sub-divisions;" from excessive diffusiveness; and from carelessness as to the attractive qualities of good writing. The abundant learning of the Puritans and Nonconformists seemed oftentimes as if too heavy for use. The opulence of their minds, which were as masculine as their morals, proved a snare to them. Whatever the subject, they not only dived into it, but pursued it to its *possible* ramifications; and, how far soever they left it for a season, they returned to it as if enchanted; holding it up afresh to view, and expatiating upon its

qualities with a wearisome minuteness. But— notwithstanding this, their contemplations when most wide, were marked by strong sense, great skill, and rare spiritual sagacity ; and those qualities compensate for many defects ; for want of unity ; for intricacy, as in Howe ; for the chance of a good idea being buried under authorities ; and for even search after a meaning in Scripture which, if not *intended*, is generally best shunned.*

The strength of the gigantic spirits in question, was in their piety. *That* was celestial ; and it gave such a glow to their works, as to become, in union with point and sprightliness, apt illustrations, and earnest seriousness, as captivating as it is impressive. But it is to their practical and devotional books only, that you must consider what is here said as applicable. Baxter, as well as Luther and Bishop Hall, appears to little advantage as a disputant.

In many of the less known authors among Nonconformists you will discern a considerable improvement in some respects, particularly manner and style : with the same elements, however, of sanctity, wisdom, and usefulness, and no less attention to the analogy of faith. I may refer as specimens o the writings of Samuel Slater, John

* See Note R.

Shower, Thomas Doolittle, Timothy Cruso, Thomas Bradbury, and Joseph Boyse ; to Benn on "Soul Prosperity;" Nathaniel Ball on "Spiritual Bondage and Freedom;" Joseph Cooper's "Prospect of Heavenly Glory;" the sermons of Mr. Manlove and Mr. Whitaker, both of Leeds ; and Morrice's "Social Religion Exemplified."

But with whichever kind of the writings in question you acquaint yourself, you will, I think, discover that none are superior and few equal to them. The gold in which they dealt may lie deep ; or it may be imperfectly fused ; or it may be beaten out ; or it may be unburnished ; but there it is, fine and sterling : and it will be valued and searched for, as either intimacy or conscious need may sway. I am satisfied (without any wish to detract from those productions of modern writers where every statement is both scripturally good, and made in perfectly educated taste) that, next to the Bible, no other books will be so often read by "sober-minded" men. This was apparent in those wonderful revivals of religion which prevailed in America, about the middle of the eighteenth century : and Dr. Raffles, in his *Life of Speneer*, notices that, while the reading of that lovely youth was extensive, it consisted, *for the most part*, of the Puritan divines.

You can, in fact, find no substitute for them. To what section of the church could you turn for a *class* of theologians so learned, so orthodox,* so devout and so practical, as are the Puritans and Nonconformists? They were all men of letters, as well as men of God. Are not their writings, to this day, the *standards* of theological literature? Where, apart from the inspired volume, is food to be found so wholesome, so solid, and so satisfying to the "hungry soul?"† Where would you seek a mind so dignified, so well furnished, or so nicely balanced as Dr. Owen's, Dr. Manton's, or Dr. Bates's; John Howe's, Dr. Watts's, or Dr. Doddridge's; Dr. Edward Williams's, Andrew Fuller's, or Robert Hall's? Intellect so noble? Wisdom so penetrating and comprehensive? Every perception so intuitively accurate and just? Such unction of spirit? Such a deep insight into the human heart? Such a fiducial and experimental knowledge of the Saviour? Piety, in short, so complete and Godlike?

When the profound Maclaurin was near his end, Shaw's pieces, one of which is entitled "Farewell to Life," were frequently in his hand. And in Dr. Doddridge's account of Mr. Steffe, who died at the age of twenty-four, you learn,

* See ante, p. 64.

† See Note S.

that, bent upon the cultivation of religion in his soul, and eminence as a preacher, that excellent young man chose the "best practical writers" for his companions, especially Howe and Baxter; not to mention "other great lights of the sanctuary." The "day seldom passed in which some of them were not in his hands." And the Doctor adds—"I think it must argue a great defect of understanding, as well as of real piety, if any theological students are negligent of this."*

As you become more conversant with such books, you will, I doubt not, think so too. For, in spite of difference of judgment from some statements, (you will, of course, "try the spirits"† in print, as well as when preaching;) or, being occasionally moved to a smile, in the case of some Puritan and Nonconformist writers, at laboured panegyrics; at excessive credulity; at awkward quaintnesses; or at too familiar, if not low, and even grotesque expressions; (never, however, equalling Jeremy Taylor in any of these faults;) you will more frequently feel constrained to blush; to bewail your own spiritual deadness, in com-

* See Note T.

† See Dr. J. Pye Smith's Sermon "On the Means of obtaining Satisfaction with regard to the Truth of Religious Sentiments." Oct. 1822.

parison with their manly vigour and soaring piety ; and so be driven to penitence, humiliation, and prayer.

Had the most inferior among them only managed "doctrines, reasons, and uses,"—for such was their usual method of treating texts,—with the ease and elegance of Dr. Bates, a better mode can scarcely be conceived of for answering the true ends of preaching. But that advance of the age was left for their successors. Nor have they failed. In Watts, and Doddridge, and Robert Hall, and Andrew Fuller, and Samuel Lavington, and many more, you see a vast improvement in pulpit preparation ; not only a steadier aim at conciseness, but a wider command of phraseology ; more perspicuity ; more force ; and more unity : the grandeur of Howe, the fulness of Manton, the refinement of Shaw, the fancy of Nathaniel Taylor, the acuteness of Dr. Goodwin, the savour of Flavel, the impetuosity of Baxter, the profundity of Dr. Owen, and the greatness of Charnock, without their defects.

The truth is, that, in consequence of those civil and religious privileges which, through God's mercy, have been granted, and through the same mercy have been continued, modern divines have had a better opportunity than their predecessors for

feeding the fancy and embellishing style, as well as for the prosecution of their ordinary labours.

If, however, *utility* is any proof of value, what books, it may be asked, have done more good than Sibbs's "Bruised Reed;" the Confession of Faith, and Larger and Lesser Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly of Divines; Flavel's "Token for Mourners," and "Method of Grace;" Alleine's "Alarm;" Bunyan's "Pilgrim;" Baxter's "Call," "Dying Thoughts,"* and "Saints' Rest;" Janeway's "Token;" all Howe's pieces; Dr. Watts's "Psalms and Hymns;" Matthew Henry's "Exposition," and other works;† Boston's "Fourfold State;"‡ Doddridge's "Rise and Progress;" Job Orton's "Three Discourses on Eternity;" Mr. James's "Anxious Inquirer;"§ and the "Life in Earnest," and other productions

* See the Life of Lord William Russell, by Lord John Russell, vol. ii. pp. 99 and 272, 2nd edit.

† The Rev. Robt. Burls, in his Sermon on the death of Joseph Pattison, Esq., notices that that gentleman was "much assisted in the way of godliness, as many others have been, by reading the works of the eminent Matthew Henry."—p. 24, Oct. 1841.

‡ See the Rev. George Clayton's Funeral Sermon for Rev. Dr. Simpson, p. 20. Oct. 1818.

§ See "A Memoir of Ebenezer Birrell, by his brother."—pp. 19—23. duod. 1843. 2nd ed.

of the Rev. James Hamilton? Or what "Charges" ever embodied more sound advice, or breathed a spirit of loftier sacredness than the "Pastoral Cautions" of Abraham Booth? Or whose publications are more original, or powerful, or compulsory of thought, than the Essays, Remains, and Sermons of my late incomparable friend, John Foster? Or, what Funeral Discourses ever made visible more intellect, or a brighter constellation of Christian excellency, than those preached by Baxter, John Howe, Dr. Bates, and Matthew Henry? The mind can no more remain passive in reading any of these authors, than in reading Shakspeare, Milton, or Sir Walter Scott.

That revered man of God, Cornelius Winter, adverted in his "Charge" at the ordination of the late Mr. Golding, to the effect of acquaintance with the Puritans in producing humility and lowly sentiments, expressly with a view to check emotions of pride and vanity; and what he said is as applicable to private Christians as to ministers. He advised his "dear young friend" to compare his own parts and services with the acquisitions and services of a Manton, a Baxter, an Owen, or a Howe. And, after guarding him against discouragement, for he only would be accountable for the talents entrusted, he added, that "the great excellence of those holy men was the care

they took to preserve sound doctrine. In general, they displaced nothing ; they mutilated nothing of the *truth* ; they kept back nothing that was profitable. There was a striking analogy between their doctrine and the Scriptures ; and, to use the saying of one of them,—“ Christ was the diadem in the bosom of all their sermons.”

LETTER XVII.

The names of the ancient fathers should be very precious with us, and the remains of their lives and labours ; the first Reformers in our own land, in other lands ; the good old Puritans.—*Rev. Matt. Henry.**

While others were at plays and interludes, at revels, or walking in the fields, or at the diversions of bowling, fencing, &c. on the evening of the Sabbath, the *Puritans* with their families were employed in reading the Scriptures, singing psalms, catechising their children, repeating sermons, and prayer ; nor was this only the work of the Lord's day ; but they had their hours of family devotion on the week days, esteeming it their duty to take care of the souls as well as the bodies of their servants. They were circumspect as to all the excesses of eating, drinking, apparel, and lawful diversions ; being frugal in housekeeping, industrious in their particular callings, and solicitous to give to every one his own. *These* were the people who underwent cruel mockings, bonds, and imprisonment.—*Rev. Daniel Neal.*

HAVING finished the object I had in view as to the Puritans and Nonconformists, I cannot help acknowledging, on a review, how very defective

* The Orig. MS.

the exhibition has been ; how many of the “ excellent of the earth ” not noticed, might have been mentioned ; and how much that is edifying has been left out, even as to those whose names have passed before you. The “ half has not been told ;” but, I hope, enough to demonstrate, notwithstanding imperfections common to man, extensive *goodness*.

My remaining observations will be of a more general nature : and, as the parties were, in the genuine sense of the word, *Christians*, let it be especially noticed that their many excellences and uncommon influence arose from a right reception of the Gospel. They were converted persons ; converted* from sin to God ; “ born again ;” “ born of the Spirit.” Their religion was *personal* ; having nothing about it speculative, dubious, dwarfish, or superficial. The foundation was laid low—in penitence and self-abasement. They came to Christ as the *Saviour* ; they rested their hopes for eternity upon the completeness of his sacrifice, and the immutability of his priesthood ; and beholding in Him, as the anointed of the Father, all grace, they sought continually to

* See a recent publication by the Religious Tract Society, entitled “The Great Change, a Treatise on Conversion, by George Redford, D.D. LL.D.” A small book, but of great worth.

him—for participation and supplies. This drawing from Christ by the “attractive force of faith,” is specially noticed by the venerable John Cotton, in the “Ten Rules” he framed “to be practised every day by converted Christians.”* Dr. Gouge frequently said that when he looked upon himself he saw nothing but emptiness and weakness; and in *Christ* nothing but fulness and sufficiency.

Thus, and thus only, can you account for the *steadfastness* of this despised and injured † body of men. “Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” no allurements could seduce them from what they believed to be the truth; nor could opposition, how wearying, or scornful, or inveterate soever, overcome them. When it seemed necessary to stand across the path of error as with a drawn sword in their hands, who ever saw them flinch? Mr. Erskine well says, in his Introductory Essay to Fawcett’s Abridgment of Baxter’s *Saints’ Rest*, that “there are only two things which they seem to have considered as *realities*—the favour of God and enmity to God. And only two parties in the universe to choose between—the party of God and the party of his

* Appended to his Farewell Sermon, when he left Eng’land. 4to. 1641.

† See Note U.

adversaries. Hence that heroic and noble tone which marks their lives and their writings."

Can it be denied that their tone *was* heroic and noble? And, although a distinction so honourable has led many to pour forth torrents of abuse, still is it really doubtful, when even Hume bestowed it, that, when the subject is dispassionately considered, they, as a body, deserve *praise*? This ought to be kept in mind; and, moreover, that as certainly as the Puritans, in common with others, had faults—some indeed belonging to the age, some to their own circumstances—so certain is it, that, in the contentions of the seventeenth century, for which they have been indiscriminately reviled, they were, after all, in purpose and action only *one* with Conformists, and nobles, and commoners of every grade; with, in short, the mass of the people, many of whom, to an invincible passion for liberty, united the love of godliness, of the rights of Englishmen, and of what Milton elegantly calls the "bright and blissful Reformation."

The latter object was ever before their eyes. It excited their utmost ardour and anxiety. When that "misguided, fanatical prelate, Laud,"—so he is designated in the fourteenth volume of the *Christian Observer*,—was but beginning to endanger it by his evil counsel, and mummeries, and intolerant requisitions, Mr. Pinke, already men-

tioned, a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and a Puritan "serious in his studies, and devout in a holy conversation," lustily sounded the alarm.

"Consider, I beseech you," said he, addressing an Oxford audience, (the passage is to be found in his "Trial of a Christian's supreme Love to Christ,") "what a dismal fog of Popery doth yet darken this island; Popery which few think of. I mean that blind, absurd, implicit faith of believing *as the church believes*. For there is not a pin to choose between him that believes in the Gospel which the church of England believes, and him that believes as that synagogue of Satan, the church of Rome, believes; neither knows anything explicitly what either church believes. Meditate on this, and what zeal, what courage, what indignation you feel in your heart against the anti-Christian imposture of Rome, let them fly, I beseech you, upon all occasions, against this *Protestant Popery*."

It was this conviction, in union with grievances of the most unconstitutional character, which gave such decision to Puritanic exertions. The stout-hearted men felt, that the tyranny and despotism which were then coming in like a flood, and the "high-flown episcopal and priestly claims" which were urged with a wilfulness hardly distinguish-

able from insanity, demanded the steadiest opposition, or they would be as fatal to the nation's welfare, as to the proper regulation of the church of Christ, and the very being of the Protestant faith. Did not events prove their correctness?

And does not this same conviction, or rather *fear*, combined with great, but, in their circumstances, very natural ignorance, as to the true nature of Christ's kingdom; and that desire of rule which, though foreign to genuine Congregationalism, was once too common to all religious parties; go far to explain the mischiefs which followed; the excesses and Achilles-like sternness of some of the Puritans; their mistakes; their defective views of liberty of conscience; and, indeed, most of the evils to which I have alluded?

Take off, however, any discount you please; and when you have done it, and pondered every known operation, and culled from some Puritanic tracts, or from sermons preached before the Parliament, or elsewhere, the worst things that can be alleged, you may ask if the Puritans exceeded—did they equal?—in what is blameable, either in speech or conduct, the upholders of arbitrary power; that ecclesiastical supremacy which was alike obnoxious to Presbyterians and Inde-

* See ante, p. 51.

pendents, though partly on different grounds? And, since the voice of posterity in the Revolution of 1688, and often by acts of legislation, has sufficiently justified both Puritans and Nonconformists, as a party, it may be asked further—whether, in respect to their public as well as private history, they did not exhibit, and that to a great extent, unsurpassed *goodness*? What patriots were ever more sincere? What soldiers more valiant? What ministers were more *in* their work, or more orthodox,* or ever made fuller proof of their ministry? What citizens were more talented, more stedfast, or more religious? In what period did Christianity flourish better in England than during the Commonwealth?

It is Philip Henry's verdict,—as sound a royalist, like his brethren generally, as ever lived,—that “though matters were very bad in some things, as to the civil estate, yet as to matters of God's worship things went well. Ordinances were administered in power and purity. This, we know, let men say what they will.”† And does not the going on *well* in religion *then* amidst war and contention, so unfavourable to it, demonstrate that which I am seeking to establish?

* See ante, p. 64.

† From Rev. Matt. Henry's MS.

Convenient, therefore, as it may be, to indulge a one-sided view : to keep the eye off Prelatists, and fixed upon Puritans ; *as if* the former—notwithstanding the ranting, roaring revelry, and profanity of maddened Cavaliers—were, by some exclusive patent, “ sweet and virtuous souls ;” and the latter, only a compound of disloyalty, rebellion, and fanaticism : investigation removes the mask, and makes the ignorance and want of candour, and dishonest sophistry, not to say the meanness, and the wickedness concealed by it, palpable. There was *not* on the one side only, but on *both* sides the disastrous conflict, men of close ambition, an ungovernable party spirit ;* strong political spleen ; arrant hypocrisy ; and even, modified as in some respects it was, heart-sickening ruffianism, and violence. The “ civil war was bloody for several years. No peace to him that went out nor to him that came in. The sword eating a deal of flesh and drinking a deal of blood.”†

You have seen in the seventh of the former Letters, Mrs. Hutchinson’s description of Puritans,

* And men, it was noticed by the Rev. Samuel Laurence, who “ fixed their religion to a party ; made that their idol. One said, if ever we are *saved*, it must be by the Common Prayer.”—From Mrs. Savage’s MS.

† Philip Henry, from Rev. Matt. Henry’s MS.

to say nothing of the mottoes to the present Letter ; and were you to read (I select a single publication out of many) an Essay on the "Causes of the Civil War," and other tracts, by the venerable Micaiah Towgood, your high estimation of them would, I think, increase ; and in proportion to your love of goodness you would, I think, condemn also, not merely inflicted cruelties, but the gross misrepresentations, the heavy charges, and the ungenerous censures, which bigotry, that "ape of Popery," bidding defiance alike to integrity and equity, to say nothing of Christian charity, has so often reiterated.

I cannot distinguish the principle of the treatment the Puritans and Nonconformists have received, as a body, from that which actuated Bayle and other infidels in their attacks, through the "man after God's own heart," upon revelation itself. There seems to be the same evil disposition in the actors ; the same aggravation of faults, and neglect of excellences ; and the same tendency to levity and scorn, rather than to either fairness or wisdom. In the one case, indeed, a despising of Christianity with enmity, and, at least, a contented ignorance, which the word of God well explains. In the other, an indulging of that selfishness which Baxter (associating it with a difference in judgment and opinion) says is "the

greatest liar and slanderer, and the most malicious calumniator in the world."

The "Treatise on Self-Denial," from which those words are cited, sets forth the master evil just mentioned in its varieties and enormities: and the results of its indulgence are, both there and in the "Cain and Abel" of the same great writer, fully displayed. The bearing upon the subject of these Letters is direct.

I hope, however, you will not think it sufficient merely to account for the injustice done to the Puritans and Nonconformists. I mistake, unless a strong presumptive argument arises out of it in favour of their *goodness*. Just think whose voice has been raised *against* them. Has it been that of the meek and humble followers of the Saviour; those who had most of the mind of Christ; who shone in the beauties of holiness? Or, has it not been that of formalists in religion, the proud, the worldly, the self-righteous, the ungodly, and the profane? People to whom the cross of Christ itself is foolishness, except to make signs with; to bow before; to wear as a crucifix; or to put in stately form outside a building? Consider the matter in the light of Scripture, and then ask, whether the enemies of Puritans and Nonconformists do not remind you of those ancient haters of Christ and godliness—the scribes and Phari-

sees, the chief priests and the elders, and other early persecutors?—and whether you may not safely infer what the Puritans and Nonconformists really were, from the character of their defamers?

LETTER XVIII.

The two thousand ejected ministers who threw themselves upon the Dissenters of this country for fellowship and support were *not* the *founders* of Nonconformity; they fled only to its sanctuary. Its records are of a higher epoch.—*Dr. Winter Hamilton.*

And who were to fill the places of these men? A writer of that day (a strict Conformist) complains that above three thousand ministers were admitted into the church who were unfit to teach because of their youth; that fifteen hundred men were ordained who were of immoral habits, besides many of no education! *These* were the men who stood in the places of Gilpin, and Bates, and Manton, and Owen, and Goodwin, and Baxter, and Calamy, and Pool, and Charnock, and Gouge, and Jenkins, and Gale, and Mead, and Howe, and Flavel, and Philip Henry, and many other burning and shining lights, whose names will be dear to the Christian church as long as it exists.—*Rev. William Jones.*

LET us now look at the state of things after the Restoration; and, as it would be only natural to suppose, even without evidence, that such men as the ejected divines—so well educated; of such commanding powers and surpassing moral worth;

and trained, moreover, in the Established Church, were within the reach of the best preferments, so you will find it was. Those baits were not wanting. And does it not "turn to them for a testimony?" And do not the principles and conduct of the Free Church of Scotland do the same?—and the yearnings of excellent clergymen in the English establishment after *its* reformation?—and the reproach, likewise, now cast upon the Act of Uniformity?*

Baxter, and Calamy, and Thomas Warren, and Dr. Richard Gilpin, were offered bishoprics; and John Howe resisted urgencies to conformity scarcely less strong. It may be said of them, however, and the large majority of their brethren, as it was said of Dr. Bates, who might have had any see in the kingdom, that neither honour, nor interest, nor court, any more than hardships, could engage them to desert their principles. They dissented from the national establishment *not* from faction, but from judg-

* Archdeacon Hare justly calls it "that second most disastrous, most tyrannical, and schismatical Act of Uniformity; the authors of which, it is plain, were not seeking unity, but division."—Quoted by the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, M.A., in his "Church and the Churches," p. 85. Oct. 1840.

Not only does Mr. M'Neile adopt the Archdeacon's description, but he uses language himself on the same subject equally correct and satisfactory.—*Ibid.* pp. 83, 97.

ment and conviction, believing the "quarrel between them and conformity, to be the old one between Christ and antichrist—who should king it in the church."*

Did they repent? You have full proof of the contrary. Many of them testified, with death in near prospect, their satisfaction and comfort in Nonconformity. Mr. Bagshaw, who lived till the beginning of the eighteenth century, noticed at a public ordination, that he had been an ejected minister so long as to have had a great deal of time to review and weigh the reasons of his decision,—and he added, "Upon an impartial and serious consideration of the case, I see no cause to change my mind. Some of you, perhaps, may say other persons have better eyes. I readily grant that : but I must see with my own."

Bishop Burnet, conversing with John Howe, avowed his belief that Nonconformity could not last long : that after Baxter and he—Howe—were laid in their graves, it would die of itself. Howe replied, that, in his opinion, its existence depended much more on *principles* than on persons. The men might die, but the principles would live.

Was he mistaken? "In England,"—the statement is Dr. Winter Hamilton's, in his Prize

* Philip Henry. From Matth. Henry's MS.

Essay on Popular Education,—“ may be numbered, upon the safest calculation, as many separatists from the Established Church as adherents; subjects as loyal, as important, as worthy of righteous maintenance as their conforming fellow-countrymen.”

It deserves observation, that, notwithstanding the afflictions of the illustrious men in question, as Nonconformists, originated in causes, and under circumstances, likely to produce the opposite of Christian love, their minds were in general “kept” from such results. Seeing their times in the hand of God;* and recognising that hand in all that happened; believing, also, his promises; and looking at their trials as fatherly chastisements; as intended to make them like Christ; patience had its “perfect work.” Their attitude towards their persecutors was, commonly, that of uncomplaining submission; of watching, prayerful silence. Having finished their education at Calvary, as Dr. Waugh finely remarked of the dying Stephen, so they practised and enforced the Saviour’s injunction, to *love* their very enemies. This, said Philip Henry, is “a great duty. And we live in a day wherein we have as much need to study it as ever people had. It is against the grain, but it is Christ’s saying.”†

* See Note V.

† From Rev. Matth. Henry’s MS.

Can you conceive of a more touching exemplification of this gracious spirit than in what is recorded of a "worthy friend" of Mr. Henry's—a native of Moston, and the ejected from Baschurch, both in Shropshire—Mr. Edward Lawrence? That good man, going with some of his sons by the house of a gentleman who had been injurious to him, gave a charge to them to this purpose—that they should never think or speak amiss of that gentleman for the sake of anything he had done against *him*; but whenever they went by his house, should lift up their hearts in prayer for him and his family.

The goodness of the ejected divines is seen in this also—that no charge of scandal, insufficiency, or immorality lies against them. Mr. Henry noticed, but a short while before he died, that though many of them were brought very low, had many children, were greatly harassed by persecution, and their friends generally poor, and unable to support them: yet, in all his acquaintance, he never knew, nor could remember to have heard, of any Nonconformist minister in prison for debt.

Mr. Joseph Alleine, when arraigned, told his judge how glad he was it had appeared that, whatsoever he was charged with, he was guilty of nothing but *doing his duty*. He remarked, that

what the witnesses had sworn amounted only to this—that he had sung a psalm and instructed his family, others being present, in his own house. If nothing urged on his behalf, he proceeded, would satisfy, he should, with all cheerfulness, accept whatever sentence his lordship might pronounce.

Was there no proof here of “a good conscience,” as well as manly courage?—Nothing to remind you of Daniel, when men interfered with his worship of the “living God?”

Can any ingenuous person doubt that what the Puritans and Nonconformists underwent, is a lengthened illustration of the principles by which that Divine prophet was governed? Regarding *all* the truths of the Bible, those that appear of less magnitude, as well as the more fundamental, as important, though not equally so, they could *not* comply with human dictates and impositions in the service of the Almighty. It seemed to them sinful to do so : ~~as~~ a reflection upon Divine wisdom ; an invasion of the Saviour’s prerogative. To *his* will, made known in his word, they bowed at once. To *that*, therefore, they appealed ; but neither to fathers, nor councils, nor traditions, nor reformers, nor martyrs. They loved the *Gospel*. They loved its ordinances, in their simplicity and purity. Obedience to apostolic

rules, they thought imperative ; and taking Christ alone as King and Head of his church,—for so the Bible says he is,—they rendered a willing homage : but in things sacred* to none else.

They stood out, with true Protestants, for the right of private judgment in religion ; in other words, for the “immediate relation existing” (as D’Aubigné defines it) “between *every individual soul*, and the fountain of truth ;” and, consequently, the exclusive authority of the Bible in all matters of belief, worship, and practice. Indeed, everything *not* so sanctioned they looked upon as innovations ; or as resting upon a basis merely human, and so as too fallible for a Christian’s faith.

Nor were they to be scared from their convictions by men’s talk about uniformity, any more than by reproach and suffering. Unity founded upon the love and forbearance enjoined in the Scriptures, they approved ; but they were too well informed not to distinguish between it and sameness in forms ; and too wise to confound things so widely different.

Could they, then, have done otherwise than as they did ? or have determined otherwise than with Dr. Manton, “to hear no voice *but* God’s in

* See Note W.

the conscience ; and no doctrine in the church *but* Christ's?" "No offices, institutions, and worship," said that sensible man, "must be allowed but such as"—the *Master*—"hath appointed. Antiquity without Scripture is no sure rule to walk by ; nor must we, as Cyprian says, look what others did before us, but what Christ did before them all."*

For upholding such views—and are they not correct?—these indomitable confessors have been accused of a want of humility ; that grace which they singularly valued and commended ; and in which, as is abundantly evident, they excelled. They ought, it is affirmed, to have acquiesced in the state of things which they found around them. The late Dr. Arnold, however, in his *Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, honourably vindicated them against this objection ; by showing its perfect extravagance, arising out of a total misapprehension of the nature of humility, and of the merits of the feeling of veneration. "All earnestness and depth of character," observed that celebrated churchman, "is incompatible with such a notion of humility. A man deeply penetrated with some great truth, and compelled, as it were, to obey it, cannot listen to any one who may be indifferent

* See Note X.

to it or opposed to it." Especially, it may be added, when the mind is penetrated by the teachings of the most high God.

What can be more clear than that, as there may be a proper rejection of authority when it goes beyond its province,* as was the case when Peter and John were commanded not to "speak nor teach in the name of Jesus," so there may be true humility in conjunction with freedom of belief and the most uncompromising opposition both to systems and opinions? Are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chargeable with *pride*, for refusing to go with the stream, and join in worship because fashionable, and appointed by state authority? Would you pronounce Paul wanting in humility, because his spirit was stirred to dispute against idolatry at Athens, and teach a "new doctrine?" If to obey God in matters of religion rather than men is *not* the plain lesson of the Bible, what *is* plain?† Did not the very nobleness of the Bereans consist in their independence—in searching the Scriptures for themselves?

Were the objection worth a farthing, it would militate equally against the nature of things, *and* inspired truth; it would put an end to inquiry;

* See Note Y.

† See Acts iv. 19; v. 29.

it would smother conscience ; it would confound humility, which is lowly-mindedness, with abjectness and servility ; it would condemn the “ glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs,” and all the sublime spirits who promoted the Reformation.

With the principles of that “ Reformation” the Puritans were thoroughly identified ; and to carry them out by removing further off Popery, and nearer perfection, than the Reformers had carried them,* was what *they* aimed at. Not, therefore, proudly ; but because their convictions, arising from acquaintance with the perfect source of *truth*, compelled them. It was the Reformation that drew men’s attention to the word of God, and unfettered their minds. This led to Puritanism. That produced an increased love to Protestantism, and the Bible upon which it rests, and everything, in short, connected with the will and church, as well as the doctrines, of Christ. There was thus a resurrection of Independency or Congregationalism : that system which, if the Scriptures have any meaning, and the judgment of the learned is of any value, and ecclesiastical history entitled to any regard, so far from being a novelty, characterised the *first* churches. You

* See Note Z.

may have observed how modestly, but firmly, this subject is touched in the Preface to the Declaration agreed upon at the Savoy in 1658, as to the Faith and Order of Congregational churches.

It cannot be amiss to remark, inasmuch as it illustrates pure Protestantism, how little it signifies to Independents, to hear accusations of novelty ; or to hear the name of Robert Brown connected with any of their views of church government, as though they originated with *him*. They know it is not so.* And they consider, moreover, those views in which there may be agreement, as neither better nor worse *because* that fickle man (who was a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England, and died such) was once zealous for them. What Protestant would either defend or denounce the Reformation, because it was forwarded by such a monarch as Henry the Eighth ? Or, not admire what is admirable in the Book of Common Prayer, because another king—James the First—called it the “English mass-book :” it being, in a great measure, the old Roman Catholic service, only retrenched, partially reformed, and translated into the vulgar tongue ? Would any lover of music condemn chanting and playing upon an organ,

* See Note AA.

because the "Homilies appointed by authority to be read in churches," still treat both as defiling "the temple of God?"

It may console ignorant or bigoted partisans, to shrug their shoulders, and look unutterable things; and speak and write disdainfully about Brownism. But what avails it to a wise inquirer? To one who hears the "voice of Christ;" and, therefore, tests every sentiment in the "balances of the sanctuary?" *The* question such a man asks, and all he cares for is this—"What is truth?" "What saith the Scripture?" that perfect and sufficient rule; that only infallible and authoritative judge? Not that he will spurn the opinions of others; or slight or undervalue them: he will, on the contrary, both con and sift them; he will cherish the "respect" that is "due to antiquity;" and he will encourage the proper sympathy of party. He will bear it in memory, too, that "the rejection"—(it is Mr. Orme's language, in his *Life of Baxter*)—"of all human authority and influence in religion, requires to be balanced by a very strong sense of the *Divine* authority, to prevent its generating a state of mind more characterised by pride of intellect, and independence of spirit, than by the humility and diffidence which are essential features of the Christian character." But he will not suffer *that*

danger, any more than the use of a nick-name—for what else is Brownism?—to deter him from endeavouring to know and do the supreme will. His obligations rise up before him too distinctly to admit of it. “You must *not consult*,” Dr. Hill said, in a sermon before the lord mayor of London, in 1644, “with the precepts of men, but with the word of God. Inquire what truth Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, revealed unto his servants, and hold *that* fast.”

It was by so doing that the Puritans and Non-conformists exposed themselves to the objection which I am considering. There was, nevertheless, nothing new in the objection; nor is there, as Dr. Arnold perceived, any weight in it. It is, after all, but a version of the hackneyed taunt, “Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed on him?” q.d. “You know they have not;” so Mr. Matthew Henry writes in his exposition upon the words; “and you ought to be bound by their judgment, and so believe and do in religion according to the will of your superiors. Will you be wiser than they?”

There have been, it cannot be denied, *Protestants*,—at least those so called, and the race is not extinct—who have thought it unreasonable to differ from great, wise, learned, and holy men,

especially those who died martyrs. This anomaly caught the attention of Dr. Owen, and in the Preface to his Enquiry into the "Original Nature, Constitution, Power, Order, and Communion of Evangelical Churches," he commented upon it with his usual ability.

But, in spite of all that can be said, Roman Catholics and high-churchmen *will* revile Dissenters, as wanting in humility, if not as the worst sort of people; and *will* insolently accuse them of heresy, and schism, and faction, and I know not what besides. But wherefore? Not because the good men so treated *are* the proud men, or the heretical men, or the schismatical men, or the factious men, such foes would have you believe; but—because they think for themselves; maintain the sole authority, and entire sufficiency of the word of God; and the right, likewise, of private judgment: because they regard traditions and pretensions not sanctioned by that word as upstart, no matter how common they may be, or how "grey-headed;" because they will not blindly submit to priestly dominion, which is the meaning of church power; because they will not wear the yoke of Pharisaism; "even (so good old John Dod calls them) all the remnants and relics of superstition;" and—because they will not be cozened by persuasions, or wily

sophistries, or any arts of concealment, out of Christian doctrines ; especially that cardinal one of justification by grace through faith ; a doctrine which Dr. Bennett has lately defended, against both the Council of Trent and Mr. Newman.

The Doctor's masterly volume furnishes another instance of the important help Puritans and Non-conformists have given to the Protestant interest ; and may show how it is, that the accusation noticed by Dr. Arnold, notwithstanding its staleness, lives. For if it *be* evidence of a want of humility for men to "contend earnestly" for truth and freedom against spiritual despotism and error, and for "the faith once delivered to the saints" against the heresies and corruptions of Popery, whether Papal or Protestant, the charge applies with unanswerable force. There is no body of men who have done more to expose the evils of Popery, or to prevent the common people being seduced by Romish emissaries ; or who have rejoiced more in the nation being a Protestant *nation* ; or to whom Protestantism, as such, is more indebted, than the Puritans and Nonconformists. Their "great ministerial abilities," as well as "wonderful piety," and mental soundness, have been brought to bear upon the reformed faith with unvarying constancy ; in the face,

indeed, of ingratitude, and slander,* and hindrances, and repulses, and cruel treatment enough to have silenced even *their* goodness ; and would have done it, had it been less eminent ; *and* their humility, had it been less deep ; *and* their zeal, had it been either less enlightened, less warm, or less pure.

* See Note BB.

LETTER XIX.

He that will be a true disciple of Christ must be zealous in the *Lord's* business, zealous in serving God, and seeking to honour him.—*Rev. Arthur Hildersham.*

The Reverend James Janeway was a merciful man, and showed great compassion to *souls*. He spent himself and hastened his own death to keep others from perishing everlastingly.—*Rev. Thomas Vincent.*

YOU hear the Puritans and Nonconformists upbraided, sometimes, with the want of public spiritedness ; as though their retired occupations had blunted the edge of religious zeal, if not destroyed it.

Has this notion any foundation ? On a cursory glance it may seem to have ; but to judge correctly, you must examine the subject ; and, notwithstanding there is *now* an expansiveness in the benevolence inspired by Christianity, which was then unknown ; notwithstanding the conduct of the godly *then* reminds you more than now, that “ the kingdom of God cometh not with observation,” or outward show—you will, nevertheless,

find that the "grace" the Puritans and Nonconformists had was ever in motion. It led *them*, as it did Caleb, to follow "the Lord fully;" to mourn, after the pattern of the Psalmist, because men kept not "the Divine law;" like the apostle, to approve themselves "in all things as the ministers of God." Philip Henry, addressing a rustic congregation, Sept. 5, 1689, observed, that "those are the true ministers of Christ that have a true love to *souls*. They carry on the same design that Christ did. Oh," he exclaimed, "the prevailing ignorance and blindness that are in the country! Can you do nothing towards men's salvation? Oh, let them be dear to you! If you can do nothing else, you can pray for them."*

They certainly did a great deal more. Nor must you confine your thoughts to ministers. The old Nonconformist divines, as well as the modern, taught that it was not only *their* business, but that of *every* believer, to seek the salvation of mankind. Oliver Heywood tells us that he had heard of a prudent Christian that used to follow persons to their shops and ploughs, and discourse with them about soul affairs; and thereby was an instrument of converting forty people to Christ.

* From Mrs. Savage's MS.

There was not, and it should be borne in mind, the same visible range then as now *for* zeal. There were no missionary societies, no Bible societies, no tract societies: scarcely a school for even a partial education of the poor. Nay, when our ancestors instituted "seminaries" for the instruction of their youth, and the preparation of some of them for the Christian ministry, how stern, at times, was opposition! They were not only shut out* from the national seats of learning, and reproached for the want of literature, but persecuted for seeking it. Against even Dr. Doddridge, one of the very best, most peaceable, and loyal of men, a prosecution was commenced, "by some dignitaries of the church of England," for teaching in an academy; and but for the king—George the Second—who can tell what would have been the consequences? *He* put a stop to it.

Besides—the Puritans and their successors, how zealously soever disposed, were affected by other and numberless impediments. They were watched, and hindered, and oppressed, and harassed; "mischief," in the solemn language of the prophet Ezekiel, "came upon mischief, and rumour was upon rumour;" their ministrations

* See the Note U.

were often controlled, and prevented; all social exercises were, for years, impossible—unless by stealth.

The lives of Flavel, Samuel Shaw, and Thomas Jollie, show you some of their straits, and how ingeniously, but Christianly, they met them. I may refer you also to Philip Henry's account of his persecution for preaching at Weston in this neighbourhood, preserved in the "Christian Witness;" to the habits of a group of Christians at Andover, as narrated by Mr. Pearsall in his "Outlines of Congregationalism;" and to the "accommodations" in the roof of the meeting-house at Stepney—those hiding-places for the persecuted—which Dr. Winter Hamilton alludes to in his sermon on the "Influence of the Pious upon the Age in which they live."

When these things are considered, and matters equitably balanced, and all the Puritans and Non-conformists *did*, contemplated, it will appear that the charge before us can be sustained only partially, and by comparison.

It was not true of Mr. Herbert Palmer *only*, that he "was a man of a very public spirit, and wholly laid himself out for good." The same may be said of his Puritanic brethren. Mark their conduct during the Commonwealth, when the Parliament devoted every Friday to consult as

to ways and means for promoting religion ; their getting rid of " ignorant and scandalous " ministers, and placing others in their room ; their efforts by means of itinerant preachers, to spread the Gospel in Wales ; their labours in bearing it to the New England Indians ; and, as you have seen, their conduct during the " Plague," when nearly all the " Conformables " left their flocks to perish. Dr. Daniel Williams having to preach a funeral sermon for Dr. Annesley, took occasion to show, from the character of the deceased, " the excellency of a public spirit." And did not Dr. Annesley himself, in his life of the Rev. Thomas Brand, memorialise as great an instance as any on record, of entire devotedness to God, in deeds of charity, and concern for the salvation of men ?

Besides, was there, it may be asked, no public spirit in the submission of the Puritans and Non-conformists to suffering, and shame, and loss for the truth's sake ?—for the principles of civil liberty, and, in many cases, of religious too ?—for the simplicity and purity of Divine institutions ; and at a time when, beside the activities of cherished enmity, there were obstacles arising out of the suspicions and movements of mankind, such as we can hardly conceive of ; though now strenuously revived by the imitators of Bancroft and Laud ?

In what category if *not* that of zeal and public spirit, would you include the advocacy of literature by our forefathers and their exhausting studies, which they never quitted unless for the benefit of others; their fast days,* and days of thanksgiving, domestic and private, as well as social and public—especially the fifth of November; their laborious preaching—for many years in the face of penalties and pains; the adaptation of their discourses to providential events, particularly deaths, because people were *then* more than ordinarily affected; their repetition of sermons; their conferences. Add to this their watchfulness over their families and relations. Oliver Heywood published his “Two Worlds” for the use of his kindred; and his “Meetness for Heaven” was intended for a funeral legacy. Nor were scattered hearers less considered. For *their* service, indeed, every inconvenience was braved, whether arising from long distances, inclement weather, or those changes as to diet and sleep, which often are exceedingly injurious to health.† Look too, at the elaborate publications

* It was not uncommon for the Rev. Thomas Jollie to forbear all food for twenty-four hours.—Fun. Sermon, p. 25, *ut supra*.

† 1673, January 3rd. This week past I have lain in five several beds, which I fear may be most likely of anything to

of these diligent servants of Christ ; their constant use of the press ; and, in connexion with it, Mr. Newcome's Preface to his " Help " for the " Right Improvement of Sickness," and also Mr. Baxter's " How to do Good to Many," when " disease and the restraint of rulers " told him his pulpit work was at an end. One reason why that excellent Puritan, the Rev. Samuel Hieron, printed his admirable sermons was, that he might make his hearers some recompence for the wrong he did them through too much quickness of delivery.* Consider, likewise, their letters, many to the poorest of their acquaintance ; their donations of books—which some ordered to be distributed at their funerals ; their bequests of Bibles ; their indefatigableness in household instruction—often preparing and copying sermons for the use of the inmates ; their closet intercedings ; and their visitations of the sick ; leaving their beds for the purpose " in the dead of the night," when it was dangerous to appear in the day-time. Mr. Vincent Alsop lay in Northampton jail six months, for praying with a sick person.

As liberty allowed, did they not teach almost daily, and from house to house, in circuits of wide

do me harm as to my health, but I trust all with God.—Philip Henry. *Diary. Orig. MS.*

* Hieron's Works, p. 163. Fol. 1624.

extent ; thus thoroughly cultivating that vineyard which surrounded them—beginning, be it observed, at home? “Let us every one,” said Philip Henry, “sweep before his own door. Every one mend one.”* Their lips, however, fed *many*, and they dispersed knowledge, though somewhat privately, yet really; and, for their circumstances, extensively. Read their lives; and say, whether it was not so? and whether they were either slumberers, or destitute of a godly zeal? You will find that Daniel Burgess was not singular in choosing “rather to wear away than rust away.”

Their zeal being *godly*, its leading characteristics deserve, and will repay, attention. It is thus that you will perceive how truly charitable it was; that the tender feeling of compassion towards mankind as sinners, alluded to in one of the mottoes to this letter, was its element, and vented itself very often in tears; and that the indications of the self-knowledge, which experience and observation, when associated with Divine teaching, produce, are everywhere visible. You will be reminded by it of the “wisdom that is from *above*, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good

* From Rev. Matth. Henry's MS.; and see Lam. iii. 40.

fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Hence there was much delicacy and patience and humility in their zeal. It was never curious under pretence of being useful. There was no kind of meanness or obtrusiveness in it. Nor was it pert, or dogmatical, or cavilling, or contentious.* It descended to no paltry tricks to effect professedly religious objects. It, moreover, respected age, and character, and station, and circumstances. Instead of indulging bad tempers under the pretence of discharging conscience; or of pleading faithfulness, the better to vent, perhaps with no measured rudeness, the bitterest spirit; or of assuming those airs which ill conceal the predominating influence of pride or envy; or of resembling that blind passion which is slow and lukewarm when "undefiled religion" is concerned, but nimble in proselyting to a party; or of being all excitement about things of no worth, and so inspiring disgust, our Puritanic and Nonconformist forefathers took great heed to their spirits.† They were studiously meek, and thoughtful, and

* In those things wherein all the people of God are agreed, I will spend my zeal; and wherein they differ, I will endeavour to walk according to the light that God hath given me, and charitably believe that others do so too.—Rev. Philip Henry. *Life, ut supra*, p. 127.

† See Note CC.

gentle. They were noble also, disinterested, and honourable; intent upon making men *Christians*; upon advancing the Divine glory by scriptural means; in short, upon helping men for both worlds.* This explains the fervid appeals of Baxter, and Howe, and Alleine; the labours of the Henrys; the searching fidelity of Dr. Owen; the benevolent efforts of Brand and Gouge; and the constancy of those efforts too. They were unwearied "in *well-doing*." Mr. Sylvester—"Baxter's friend"—often made it a matter of request to God in prayer, that his life and usefulness might continue and expire together.

Dr. Cotton Mather, ever intent upon "works of faith" and labours of *love*, published his "Essays" for the purpose of stirring Christians up to a like course. You learn that it was one of his first thoughts—What *good* may I do this day? And that he had his appropriate list of questions with the same object, for each morning in the week. So had the late Mrs. George Clayton; and it is mentioned in Mr. Sortain's instructive memoir of her. Mr. Machin, ejected from Whitley, in Cheshire, used to engrave, wherever he went, a text of Scripture on the mantel-pieces, walls, or trees. He hoped that some would be

* See Matt. vi. 33; 1 Tim. iv. 8.

thus induced to look into their Bibles, and that God would set home the words upon their hearts. Mr. Case closed his public ministry, when ejected in 1662, by exhorting every one to set apart a considerable portion of his estate for the benefit of the poor, and account it a hallowed thing dedicated to God. Thomas Gouge, by his "Surest and Safest Way of Thriving,"—recommended by Baxter, and Doctors Owen, Manton, and Bates—still spurs Christians on to like devotedness. And was it not the same pattern of every virtue, whose time—though his piety was "still and quiet," and "more in substance than show"—was spent in plans for employing the poor; in frequent journeyings through Wales to spread the best knowledge; in scattering Bibles and religious books; and in establishing schools?

It was, I grant, reserved for Dr. Doddridge to suggest plans for a wider propagation still of Christianity—for spreading it all around; and to enforce the subject, also, by pointing out the "evil and danger of neglecting the souls of men;" for Dr. Carey to stimulate to the same sublime objects, by deducing from Isa. liv. 2, 3, those choice mottoes—Expect great things, Attempt great things; for Dr. Edward Williams and Dr. Bogue to further Christian missions by the most spirit-stirring appeals; and for the late John Foster to

exhaust all argumentation for the same kind of activity, by a discourse before the Baptist Missionary Society, never outdone in force, thought, or eloquence. But the seed from which such a crop and all the subsequent harvest have sprung, was sown by the "blessed" Reformers ; and the no less blessed Puritans and Nonconformists. The *principles* which those good and upright men espoused from God's word, are those which have given such life and industry to the church ; which founded an empire of religion, and civilisation, and Congregationalism also, in the new world ;* which continue to spread in all directions ; and which will do so more and more, it may warrantably be expected, until the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

* See Note DD.

LETTER XX.

To live as that honourable and excellent lady, the Lady Mary Armyne,* a munificent benefactress of the ejected Non-conformists did, "in gravity, prudence, humility, temperance, and in a charitable, peaceable, impartial righteousness; studying the *realities*, even God and her Redeemer, grace, and glory, and her own heart, and duty, and how to do good, and to prepare for her day of account, will prove more safe and comfortable at the last, than the proud, wrathful, turbulent religion of such as strive to set up the church of Christ (they mean in truth *themselves*) by persecution or division, by hunting or destroying their fellow-Christians, or reproaching them, and avoiding them as unworthy their communion, &c. — *Rev. Samuel Clark.*

The principles of vital godliness remain ever unchanged. Christian devotion is the same now as it was in the days of Howe and Owen, of Leighton, Baxter, Henry, and Doddridge—men whose names shall be in everlasting remembrance.—*Dr. M'Al.*

I MAY now ask, I think, without presumption—whether it is not a duty to *remember* the Puritans and Nonconformists?—to meditate upon their

* See Note EE.

eventful story? to study their distinctive principles? to emulate their catholicity of spirit? * knowing their "doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, and patience," to tread in their steps? Instead of being ashamed of such an ancestry, to be imitators of them as they were of Christ? How constantly his love constrained them! Was not "the stamp" of his religion (a phrase used by Dr. Sibbs, in his funeral sermon for Sir Thomas Crew) "*set on all*" their "*courses in their whole conversation*?" And what can more convince you of the reality and blessedness of that religion than the displays now given of its nature, influence, and power?

Should we forget that our present liberties, under Divine Providence, originated with, and were matured by, the generous sacrifices, the sufferings, and the prayers of the same unrivalled men? Besides—can it be fairly doubted that the Protestant faith itself has been indebted beyond calculation for its *continuance* among us to

* "My acquaintance" with Nonconformists "is very little, but as far as it doth extend, I must do them this justice, that they are of a very loving, healing, and uniting spirit. I have heard them speak very well of good Conformists, and as free to acknowledge the grace of God in *them*, as in those of their own persuasion, and as ready to hold terms of friendship with us." The Conformists' Fourth Plea for the Nonconformists, p. 101. 4to. 1683.

their powerful defences, to their unceasing use of inspired truth; to their union against Popery even with those who otherwise most opposed them; and to their own example, in a walk becoming the Gospel? Or, that the time has arrived when the principles of the Reformation have again to be upheld with neither less resolution nor boldness than heretofore, if threatened mischiefs are to be prevented? For should Protestantism be corrupted, or overthrown, which is done by giving efficiency to "church principles," not only will be let in

" Eremites and friars,
White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery ;"

MILTON.

but despotism in its most diabolical forms will be restored; priestly pride again become rampant; and every right dear to Englishmen be perilled. Poison itself is not more destructive to human life than sacerdotal domination to liberty.

The late Mr. Palmer, in his "Bartholomew Day Commemorated," wisely endeavouring to awaken our drowsy gratitude for existing blessings, pressed a *frequent* recollection of the ejected champions.

But let us do more. Let us keep in mind the connexion there is between Puritanism and Non-

conformity, and the *preservation* of those blessings; and, likewise, between the excellences which have been shown, and the agency of the Spirit of God. As the Puritans and Nonconformists, after all, shone only with a borrowed light, we should devoutly ascribe whatever was Christianlike in them to the right cause; to the sovereign Author of good. And then—they are the best flowers we can strew upon their tombs—"stand fast," as they did, in the liberty where-with all Christ's servants are made "free;" aspire to their regular devotion; to their renunciation of the world; to their skill in every art of holy living.* There will thus be no danger of committing that Corinthian sin,—glorying in men.†

What can more clearly show a spirit of arrogance, the mockery of all that is catholic and holy, than treating such eminent servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, as not of the true church, as none of his ministers, because Puritans and Nonconformists? If *such* men as Dod, and Hilder-

* How dignified, how angelic, how divine, is the Christian life! Happy are we when the names of Saint and Puritan are justly applied to us, though in scorn, by the men of the world! *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*—The "Laws of Christ," by Joseph Turnbull, A.B., p. 216. oct. 1832.

* See Tombe's *Anthropolatria*. 4to. 1645.

sham, and Blackerby, and Fairclough, and Owen, and Bunyan, and the Henrys, and Angier, and Baxter, and Bates, and Howe, and Manton, and Witsius, and Doddridge, and Watts, and Edwards, and Witherspoon, and Payson, were *not* men of God, faithful ministers of his word, and blessed in their labours, lives, and deaths, where will you seek, where can you find them ?

Such, however, they *were*; and when party names are no more known, and “the wicked silent in darkness,” they will shine “as the stars for ever and ever.” The venerated John Cotton remarked—that, although the chief ground of his readiness to be gone was the unutterably sweet and rich entertainments which, by foretaste, as well as promise, he knew the Lord had reserved for him; yet it contributed unto this readiness when he considered the saints to whose company and communion he was going—particularly Perkins, Ames, Preston, Hildersham, Dod, and others, who had been peculiarly dear unto him, besides the rest in that general assembly.

And—how did Mr. Jenkyn, the expositor on Jude, when preaching a funeral sermon for Dr. Seaman, indulge similar emotions ! “Sometimes,” is his language, “when I recall the memories of the great Gouge and Gataker; the holy and

delightful Whitaker; the prudent Calamy; that man of prayer, Ash; and of tears, Nalton; that sweet name and man of affection, Love; also of learned Cranford; true-hearted Taylor; victorious Vines; laborious and upright Jackson; richly adorned Drake; Marshall, that master in the art of preaching; Burroughs, another great ornament of the pulpit; judicious and painful Caryl; that great pattern of industry and sanctity, Dr. Wilkinson; and now, lastly, the profound Dr. Seaman. When, I say, I recall the memories of these now blessed worthies, I am ready to say—Lord, why do I long no more to get among them? And yet, what are *these* to Jesus Christ for drawing out my affection, and longings for heaven; in whom are centered all the excellences of these, and of all the millions of saints that have been from the beginning of the world, that now are, or ever shall be; and compared to *him* are no more than the faint and feeble flame of the smallest candle to the sun when shining forth in greatest glory! And without whom, heaven itself, with all its other furniture of saints and angels, decked with the shining attire of all their possible perfections, would be but as a sheet of ciphers without a figure, and could entertain us only with pleasures in the notion and delights of mere imagination.”

Such, surely, is noble enthusiasm. But is there no danger lest, instead of indulging in it, some should pervert even the gracious attainments of these admirable men to their own discouragement; and so regarding their *goodness* as beyond reach, foster a spirit of carelessness, if not indifference, perhaps despondency? But—how great soever the cause for humiliation that, after every effort, we fall so short of the eminent saints whose goodness we have been observing—would it not be wiser, better, and more for the honour of God, to stir ourselves up to a lawful emulation? An inspired apostle had his eye upon no uncommon evil, and its cure also, when he said—“Be not slothful, but followers of them”—their example—“who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

This seems a suitable place to inquire, what becomes of the argument, spoken of at times with great confidence, in favour of the Church of England established by law? The argument is this—that, inasmuch as that church can number so many good men in its communion, it is entitled *therefore* to preference.

Now, without going into the question, as to the necessity or advantage of a religious establishment, or the grounds upon which conformity to it is defended, and its choice by many con-

scientiously influenced, I would merely say—is this sound or scriptural reasoning? Is it reasoning at all? For if it be admitted—and who can deny it?—that the Church of England has wonderful attractions; that it affords the best opportunities for literary retirement; that a fashionable standing in society, rich preferments, ease, wealth, mitres, and the ermine, are all on its side, it is clear, to say nothing about instilled prejudices,* that odds are thus created, which, while arraying the subject with a winning interest, make its logic ridiculous.

But waiving this, I ask—whether Puritans and Nonconformists, who have chosen their ecclesiastical polity in the use of Scripture, apart from, and not a few in express refusal of, the allurements referred to, to say nothing of stations of usefulness actually abandoned, are less likely to be right, or less worthy of consideration, as upright men, than the best Conformists? I ask, further—whether Nonconformity may not, for this reason, press *its* claims with extraordinary force? Surely, if the fashionable system is to be preferred, *because* it nourished, to select a few from a host, Jewel, and Hooker, and Usher, and Joseph Hall, Hervey, Newton, and Romaine; the

* See the Note S.

inference cannot be less conclusive as to churches which comprehended Philip Henry, John Howe, Dr. Owen, Baxter, Doddridge, Watts, Darracott, and thousands more. Besides—have not such churches, being unconnected, like those of the New Testament, with dazzling temptations, *therefore*, a greater similarity to the apostolic churches than any political hierarchy *can* have? and is there not *so* a strong presumption in their favour?

The fact is, that, in every such “argument” as that now noticed, the volume of inspiration, which ought to rule, is, more or less, lost sight of, and its place usurped by party spirit and “great names;” if not by what “is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.” Were professed Christians but to remember, that one is *their* “Master, even Christ:” were they to employ themselves in studying, with humble teachableness, *his* kingdom, its nature, and laws: *his will*, distinct from secular considerations, and in view of accountability, how different would be the effects! There would, at all events, be less tampering with the truth and church of God. Men would look at systems, and each other, with new eyes, and new feelings. They would be less prone to despise one another; to bend principle to expediency; to fly to the traditions of corrupt times; to substitute a priesthood for the

church ; to put the authority of the realm as to things sacred (which, notwithstanding Mr. Gladstone's solemn fallacies, are daily more and more seen to be beyond its province,) in the place of the Saviour's teaching. They would learn that God's word, containing the things that are *most* ancient, contains the only true antiquity ; and that, although Christianity *has* no earthly priest, it *has* a "great High Priest that is passed into the heavens," and, likewise, what Archbishop Leighton, in his commentary on Peter, calls "a priesthood of Christians ;" but none else. That it has emphatically a king and a government of its own ;* a wisdom of its own ; a people of its own ; prospects of its own ; and all so entirely of a spiritual character—"of God"—as to be incapable of amalgamation, without grievous hurt, either with the men, the doings, or the maxims of the "world." The goodness of Puritanism and Nonconformity, as contending for and exemplifying that spiritual character, would *then* stand a chance of admiration.

You would hear nothing of one of Dr. Arnold's crotchets, that "the existence of dissent is a great evil ;" because it would be *seen* (did not Dr. A. himself see it the last year of his life ?)

* See the Note X.

that such a conceit is based upon assumptions altogether worldly; so impregnated with heathenism and Popery, as to be antichristian.*

Indeed, unless I am mistaken, dissent would appear to be what it really is—GOODNESS, operating in harmony with revealed TRUTH, the *love* of that truth, and *obedience* to it. For it is not a matter of choice, but necessity, that we are Dissenters.

The Rev. A. J. Morris, in his "Congregational Dissent Apostolical Conformity," has put the matter accurately. "We dissent," he observes, "because we cannot help it. Dissent, as such, is not chosen by us at all. In quest of truth we meet with certain things that seem to have the necessary proof; with all simplicity we adopt them. *They* constitute dissent, but that is not our reason for adopting them. We take them in as *truth*—not because they are opposed by other minds, but approved by our own. If we retire from other churches because of their erroneousness, they are responsible, and not us, for our dissent. If they have corrupted the truth, added to it, or taken from it, we cannot be bound by their inventions. We owe no allegiance to error.

* Popery is heathenism revived and varnished over. Rev. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

Looking at the matter in its highest aspects, we are not Dissenters. They only are Dissenters who dissent from the *truth*; and they alone conformists who conform to *it*."

As that kind of conformity increases, it follows that every attempt to force conscience, or to oppose error, or to spread even truth, by any besides scriptural means, will appear to be no better than using "Antichrist's broom to sweep Christ's house with;" (the speech was Mr. Caryl's before the Parliament;) and will, therefore, be suppressed both as impolitic and sinful. The delicacy, and consideration, and forbearance which run through the twelfth, fourteenth, and fifteenth chapters of the epistle to the Romans, will be substituted for judging* and dictation; and the things that "make for peace" be as diligently followed as they are now shunned. There will be witnessed, moreover, in full exercise that "fervent charity"—love—to which the apostle Peter exhorts "above all things;" that love to the "*brethren*"—to Christians *as Christians*†—which, in addition to its worth as one of the "fruits of the Spirit," as greater than even faith and hope, has the distinction of being *the* mark, by which a man may "know" that he has "passed from death unto life."

* See Note FF.

† See Note GG.

Is it hard to perceive how dark a shade would be thus cast over mere Act of Parliament uniformity in religion, even if the diocese of Exeter had never proclaimed the utter emptiness of the pretension : if the Puseyitic schism had never demonstrated it ? Would it not become apparent that the statute of ejection in 1662, and all such measures, however they may have given being to customs, or ceremonies, or forms, were for religious ends worse than useless ?* Indeed, in proportion as God's word is made the standard of judgment, those dreams about "the church," of which some vaunt, will be seen to be Utopian chimeras, as valueless for every godly purpose as either monkish legends, or the popish idealism of Oxford "developments." In that proportion, too, will the realities of the Christian state, which have to do with man's responsibility to his Maker, and progress in holiness when renewed, be dealt with *as* realities. Consequently, while "charity," under the influence of the Holy Ghost, will do the work allotted to her ; true scriptural unity, the expression of Christian love, not latitudinarianism, nor the mere uniformity of external order, will, as of old, be the one great

* That phantom *Uniformity* has been our curse ever since the Reformation.—Dr. Arnold's *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. pp. 338, 339. 2d ed.

aim of good men. Perfect agreement will be modestly waited for until that world shall be obtained, where the "saved," walking in light now unknown, will, though not till then, see "eye to eye."

Difficult as the conception, because of present evils and infirmities, undoubtedly is, it is gladdening to think, that such blessedness as that just mentioned, is before every human being that fears and loves God; and that the "Son of man," when he comes, will "be glorified in his saints"—all their imperfections having passed away, and grace alone being triumphant. In that day, indeed, the enemies of the cross will be "covered with shame;" and believers, whatever their earthly lot—no matter how obscure, nor with whom they were classed, nor where they lived, nor through what floods of tribulation they waded—will be exalted to immortal dignity and honour. Strifes, and jars, and prejudices, and envy, and jealousies, having ceased, the "church," which is neither a building, nor a priesthood, nor any ecclesiastical establishment, but the "body of Christ," embracing every individual "born again," from the fall of Adam to the "consummation of all things," will be *one*—in affection, and service, and glory—for ever. Each member of it will be welcomed by the Saviour himself, to the "prepared kingdom;"

all will be arrayed in "robes made white in the blood of the Lamb;" having "overcome," they will "sit on the throne"—and they will "judge the world;" "be assessors with Christ," as Dr. Doddridge explains it, "in that solemn judgment when he shall condemn the ungodly."

Is there not here an incentive to love and unity among Christians, unutterably strong? How strange the surprise which must come upon the "redeemed," when, assembling "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," they will witness *all* who loved "Christ and his appearing," publicly acknowledged, without regard to sects or parties, as "kings and priests unto God!"

But—can fancy, even helped by revelation, picture the consternation that will fill such, if they died impenitent, as shall find themselves *judged* by those whom they "hated," if not zealously persecuted; against whom, pursuing them

with detraction, slander, mocks,
And all the venom'd engines of despite,
WITHERS.

they spake only "grievous things;" and that proudly, and contemptuously; whose very names they "cast out as evil?"

Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgot, and that we might agree to sit down together as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear *His* word, to imbibe *His* spirit, and to transcribe *His* life in our own.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

APPENDIX.

Note A, p. 10.

SEE what account to make of the written word. In it we have the commands of *Christ*. That is the rule of our worship as well as faith. What a mercy it is that we have the free use of our Bibles; that we are taught in all our worship to walk according to *that rule*! Bless God for the Reformation which reduced things to the standard, the institution; that we are not bound to traditions or decrees; that we have such a touchstone to try by. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

It is our duty to stand fast in our *liberty*; not to be again subject to ceremonial ordinances, Col. ii. 20. Moses is buried, and let us never consent to those who attempt to revive him again by a new ceremonial law, which they would lay as a yoke upon the necks of the disciples—saying to our souls, Bow down that we may go over. And, being delivered from carnal ordinances, let us see to it that we be *spiritual* in our worship, Phil. iii. 3. The shadows are done away, and the substance is come. Let us, therefore, be substantial Christians. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

We must, in our places, bear our testimonies against all corruptions in the *worship* of God; only let our zeal be regular, and according to knowledge. Let it be governed by wisdom and charity, not bitter zeal. Be zealous for and in true

worship—fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 11; lively in praying, in hearing. Warm devotions will contribute much to our communion with God—as the angels, who are seraphim—burners. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

God hath been very particular and exact in the institution of his ordinances. He has not left it to the fancies and humours of men, but has given us the “pattern in the mount.” It was so in the Old Testament, and we cannot think him less kind to his church now. The Lord’s supper is “received of the Lord.” We observe “what Christ has *commanded*,” that we may not do what is right in our own eyes, nor “teach for doctrines the commandments of men,” which is vain worship, Matt. xv. 9. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

And see the “Vanity of Human Inventions,” by the Rev. John Wilson, who was ejected from Backford, in Cheshire. duod. 1666. His treatise, entitled, “Nehushtan, or a sober and peaceable Discourse concerning the abolishing of things abused to superstition and idolatry,” duod. 1668, may be read with advantage at the present time.

Note B, p. 35.

See Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of the Rev. Matthew Henry, pp. 314, 315, 3d edit. chap. xiv.; and also Palmer’s Noncon. Mem. vol. ii. p. 12; and the Preface to Dr. Calamy’s Account, pp. xxiv. xxv. 2d edit. 1713.

Note C, p. 37.

1693, Wednesday, Mar. 15. I was much refreshed by that passage of David, Psalm lxix. 19—“Thou hast known my

reproach." 'Tis that with which the Psalmist comforts himself as to all his reproaches; that they were known of *God*: There is not a scorn or reproachful song cast on God's people, but he hears it, and takes notice of it. Mrs. Savage. Diary. Orig. MS.

It is not unworthy of remark, how seldom the writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists contain any allusion either to their sufferings or privations! They do, indeed, sometimes contrast them with the repose and peace of the upper sanctuary, as Oliver Heywood does, in his "General Assembly," Works, vol. v. p. 422; but never, to my knowledge, with revilings, still less with anger. And this did not proceed from heedlessness, but from grace and goodness. They seem, and you see it in Mr. Ambrose, to have been seldom more affected than by what touched their "innocency," their "good name." Reputation was dear to them, as it is to all virtuous minds. Instead, however, of returning railing for railing, even when most reproached, they turned their thoughts, like Mrs. Savage, to God; to Him who was "despised" of men; to the last great day, when, as one—Life of P. Henry, p. 212, oct. 1825—observed, there will be a resurrection of *names* as well as of bodies; to, in short, the bliss of heaven. "No nicknames," says Oliver Heywood, "shall follow" the saints "to *heaven*. They shall not be *there* called Puritans, fanatics, schismatics, or fools: possibly," he adds, "they may even be *honoured among men when dead*: the memory of the just is blessed." Heywood's Works, vol. v. p. 428.

How observably this is the case with John Bunyan! The name of the "meek, good man,"—so Southey calls him—was *once* associated only with the vulgar. Cowper, fond as he was of the "excellent of the earth," durst not mention it for fear of moving a sneer. But, gradually, it has been accumulating renown; and now it is *the* name—like Milton's, another Nonconformist—which statesmen, and poets, and biographers, and reviewers, and scholars, delight to *honour*. The commissioners on the fine arts mention Bunyan among the "distingu-

guished persons" to whose memory statues might with propriety be erected in, or adjoining, the new Houses of Parliament.

His "Pilgrim's Progress," printed in the handsomest forms, is one of the typographical ornaments of the nineteenth century; it is the subject of almost every variety of illustration; it is decorated for drawing-rooms. And, although a great writer "degraded" a discourse on "Taste," by an allusion to the Dreamer's immortal work too full of prejudice to be mistaken—see Burke's Works, vol. i. p. 80. 4to. 1792—the Edinburgh Review has recommended its *style* to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command of the English language. See Macaulay's Critical and Historical Essays, vol. i. p. 423. The late Dr. Arnold's admiration of the enchanting volume in question seems to have been almost unbounded; and it is the more striking, because of his low estimate of the "divines" of his own church. "John Bunyan" he held "to have been a man of incomparably greater genius than any of them, and to have given a far truer and more edifying picture of Christianity. The Pilgrim's Progress," he adds, "seems to be a complete reflection of Scripture, with none of the rubbish of the theologians"—that is, those to whom he referred—"mixed up with it." Life of Dr. Arnold, *ut supra*, vol. ii. pp. 64, 65.

The honour to which Oliver Heywood refers is brought to mind also by the increased, and increasing, demand for the *writings* of the Puritans and Nonconformists; and the reprint, too, of many of them. The "Series of Select Christian Authors," by Mr. Collins, of Glasgow, was a lovely enterprise; and was greatly enhanced in value by the matchless "Essays" of Drs. Chalmers, Gordon, Brown, Wardlaw, Young, and Pye Smith, John Foster, the poet Montgomery, and others. The example was imitated; and now, indeed, there is in operation a scheme by Mr. Nelson, of Paternoster-row, for the *cheap*

publication of the works of the English Puritan Divines, upon a similar plan, which, it is hoped, will scatter them in all directions.

And is it not so by the publication of the "Letters and Speeches" of Oliver Cromwell, "with elucidations?" That vigorous work may, and, it is hoped, will, open the eyes of many to two things, which, although to some they may be as startling as a thunderbolt, and perhaps as unwelcome, are yet sustained by facts. The one is—the *religion* of Cromwell, to which Mr. Carlyle does unusual justice. The other is—the assurance, by the same authority, that the "ancient *Puritan* Reformers were, as all reformers that will ever much benefit this earth are, always inspired by a *heavenly purpose*." See the *British Quarterly Review*, No. V. pp. 56, 60, 71. The whole article, by a pen not to be mistaken, and of special competency, will reward attention.

Note D, p. 37.

"Let us live in the holy exercise of fear and trembling. The trembling Christian has these advantages above others.

1. He lives more a life of faith. He trembles, and therefore looks at Christ as his strength and support.

2. He lives more humbly. Fear is opposed to high-mindedness.

3. He is more compassionate. The trembling Christian is not censorious, but pities the ignorant and those that go astray, considering himself.

4. He is more wakeful, and the less secure. Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

Rev. James Owen, whose funeral sermon Mr. Matth. Henry preached and published. From Rev. Matth. Henry's MS.

R

Note E, p. 45.

The "darkness" alluded to, taken in connexion with Mr. Ambrose's explication of the passage, is full of instruction—not merely as to the text itself, but as a clue to church history for centuries: and, likewise, as illustrative of a profitable perusal of the Scriptures.

The Puritans and Nonconformists, like Bucer, Calvin, Martyr, Beza, and others of the Reformers, were remarkable for endeavouring, by diligent study as well as prayer, to "understand" what God has revealed. Their reading was "staid, sedate, considerate." See Dr. Owen on the Causes, Ways, and Means of understanding the Mind of God. Works, vol. iii. p. 471. oct.

It is to be feared that the very familiarity with the inspired language, which is inseparable from a proper education, has, not unfrequently, produced a want of the thoughtfulness which the early Protestants so generally discovered when looking into the holy book.

In estimating the searching pursuits of those distinguished men, it should be remembered how closely, for ages, the fountains of truth had been shut up through the influence of Popery, that, so soon as they were accessible, they were resorted to with inconceivable eagerness: and that the light which thus burst upon mankind, made the previous darkness visible.

It was so in reference to the passage before us—Gen. iii. 15; and Mr. Ambrose notices Luther, because of its "obscurity," complaining that, although it should of all men be rightly known, it had been accurately unfolded by none that he knew. There is not, it is added, one among the ancients that hath explicated it according to its dignity. Looking unto Jesus, book iii. ch. 1, sect. 11.

This was a stroke at the "Fathers," to the real worth of whom the study of God's word opened men's eyes. *Their*

authority, which, till now, had, during many centuries, been supreme, was rejected. The "famous and worthy" Perkins, an undying ornament to the University of Cambridge, ascribes it, without ceremony, to the devil, that men should have neglected the Scriptures, "to betake themselves to the writings of schoolmen and fathers." Works, vol. iii. p. 393. fol. 1618. And, contending for the entire sufficiency of the Bible as a "perfect rule," he rejects "traditions" also, as "what can never settle the conscience;" and treats their advocacy as essentially Popish. Ibid. pp. 492, 493. The doctrine of the "succession from Peter," that master-piece of priestcraft, fares no better in the hands of this strong-minded Puritan. It is all "nothing," he says, "when the truth appears—for succession in person without succession in doctrine is no note of a church. Let them show succession in the apostles' doctrine, and we yield." Ibid. p. 389.

I cannot help referring, in further elucidation of the text—the "first hint of Jesus," as Mr. Ambrose says, "that ever was read or heard of in the world"—and which has occasioned these remarks, to that storehouse of sacred literature, Dr. Pye Smith's *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, vol. i. pp. 231—235. 2d edit.

Note F, p. 64.

"The work and office of Christ's ministers is to *teach*, not to command or judge. Their power is declarative: they are not lords over God's heritage. Nor any of them, nor any company of them, has power to make new laws in the worship of God. But, as the Levites under the law, to teach Jacob God's judgments, Deut. xxxiii. 10. They are to *teach*: and, therefore, must know and learn themselves; must be 'apt to teach,' 1 Tim. iii. 4; must 'rule' in their own houses, but

'take care' of the church of God, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5. They must have compassion on the ignorant. They are 'teachers of babes,' Rom. ii. 20." Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

Note G, p. 73.

"1661. Nov. 25. A day of prayer at Bryn: few were present, but the Lord was there, according to his promise, with two or three, assisting and, I hope, accepting in Christ Jesus. I went that night to Wem; late; but no evil befel me. Blessed be God!

26th. Much opposition at Wem. The lecture forbid. But, after a while, liberty was granted, not without difficulty. I preached first from Job xxxvi. 21. Then Mr. Lawrence from Psa. lxii. 5. I slept that night at the parsonage, where was Mr. Porter, Mr. Campian, &c., men of far greater abilities than I, yet laid aside as I am. Return, O Lord, how long?

27th. At Loppington, where, the next day at my coming thence, I heard the rest of my brethren, living in the county, were warned to Shrewsbury for what was done at Wem exercise. Lord, break snares, and plead the cause of thy people.

28th. News of my danger got home before me, which caused some fear to my dear wife, but our heavenly Father careth for us: blessed be his name!

Dec. 3rd. I hear the Shropshire ministers, who were many, ten at least, that were present at Wem exercise, were sent for into Shrewsbury by the deputy lieutenants, and for some time confined there. The reason of my escape was my being out of their verge. Blessed be God; oh how sweet and precious is liberty! Lord, I have not prized it near the value of it." P. Henry. Diary, Orig. MS.

Mr. Henry was often at Wem, as you see by his Life. He

visited the place after the desolating fire in 1676. Life, p. 135, *ut supra*. When he preached a funeral sermon there for Mr. Taylor, who had been ejected from Edstaston, and which is one of Mr. Henry's eighteen sermons published in 1816, he said—"I have seen two Wems; an old one and a new one—Is the new one a new one indeed?" From Matth. Henry's MS.

Mr. Turner, the vicar of Walberton, in Sussex, and the intimate friend of Mr. Philip Henry, has a short chapter in his "History of Remarkable Providences," on "present retribution to the observers of Sabbaths." The calamity just referred to is there thus noticed:—

"Towns and families that have been more strict and regular upon that"—the Lord's—"day, have commonly fared better than their neighbours who have been profane and licentious. Even within the circuit of my own knowledge, the town of Whitchurch, in Shropshire, escaped public calamities better than some of her sister-towns, as Drayton, *Wem*, Newport, &c., where frequent, and sometimes dreadful, fires made great devastations. And which deserves not to pass without a nota bene, the difference of their devotions upon that day was notable to a common eye. In the former you should scarce see an idle person walking in the streets, but their doors and windows close shut, the people catechising, praying, and singing of psalms, &c. In the other, the doors open, the *streets too much frequented with idle company*, and licentious exercises. And even in Whitchurch, where the plague first, and afterwards a fire, had the greatest influence, the rector, or minister of the parish, did often enough, and very plainly, admonish the inhabitants of that particular street, called the New Town, of their careless observance of the Lord's-day: as if *that*, in his judgment, were the distinguishing sin of that street, above any others in the town." Chap. lxxiv. p. 97. fol. 1697.

Note H, p. 79.

To a lady we owe the Rev. Samuel Slater's Discourse of Closet Prayer, 12mo. 1691. See the Preface to it.

The "Meditations of Sir William Waller so affected Mr. Nath. Mather unto a commendable emulation, as to produce his "Occasional Reflections." See the Ecclesiastical History of New England, book iv. p. 218, &c. fol. 1702.

To a physician, Dr. Trotter, we are indebted for Boston's Fourfold State. See Mr. Boston's Life, p. 148.

Some of Dr. Doddridge's best sermons were preached and published at the desire of Wm. Coward, Esq. Doddridge's Works, vol. ii. p. 211. oct.

Note I, p. 84.

"Is it eternal life that I am in hopes of, and in the way to? What! and no more life and liveliness in drawing near to God? For shame, O my soul! Do not thus offer the torn and lame, since the God I serve is a great king.' Mrs. Savage. Diary, Orig. MS.

Note J, p. 93.

"A believer lives upon the Son of God, upon the *love* of the Son of God. He can say, 'who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.' Let faith plead heartily upon this. It will be life [to your souls, and death to your sins. How it comes home! He loved *me* in particular, and gave himself for *me*. In the Lord's supper it is brought to us. 'My Lord, and my God.' This is a witness to ourselves—'*my* beloved is *mine*.' This makes

up all. It will be a continual feast. This mercy of assurance is not so much looked after as it has been. Or we do not give the diligence that we should. *Think* how we should live if we could but live the life of assurance." The Rev. Timothy Jollie. From the Rev. Matth. Henry's MS.

Note K, p. 100.

"We little think what losers we are by our wry looks; by looking *wrong*. There are three things wherein we miss it.

1. When we look for that from man which is to be had from God only—help, succour, refuge.

2. When we look for that in ourselves that is to be in Christ only—that is, a righteousness.

3. When we look for that happiness in things below, which are seen; which is to be had only above, in things unseen."

Rev. Philip Henry. From Rev. Matth. Henry's MS.

Note L, p. 107.

What would be the price of such masterly sketching, as to many Puritans and Nonconformists in the olden time, as that of "Life at Pinkie Burn," the residence of the late Rev. J. Watson, pastor of the Congregational church at Musselburgh? See his "Memoir," by W. L. Alexander, M.A., ch. vi. duod. 1845.—Now Dr. Alexander.

Note M, p. 112.

"When I was young, I was wont to go up the Wrekin Hill with great pleasure (being near my dwelling,) and to look down

on the country before me, and see the villages as little things ; but when I was weak with age and sickness the last time I went up, if I did but cast my eye downwards, my spirits failed, and I was ready to fall down in sudden death." Baxter's Works, vol. xi. p. 404. Treatise on "Obedient Patience."

Note N, p. 113.

There is a farm-house yet standing near Wem, a mile on the Ellesmere road—called the Ditches, with which Nonconformist associations connect themselves ; because, for a while, it was the residence of the Rev. Joshua Richardson, who was ejected from Middle, in the neighbourhood. See the "Life of Mr. Philip Henry," p. 457, *ut supra*. Besides which, it was the house at which Mr. Philip Henry, as appears by his Diary, frequently visited, and "stayed all night." That good man thus records a marriage which took place in it.

"1672. June 10. Mr. John Griffith, married at Dyches, to Mrs. Sarah Richardson, by Mr. Mainwaring, [ejected from Malpas.] I gave them afterwards an exhortation suitable to the occasion ; 1 Cor. vii. 39, 'Only in the Lord.' Lord, give thy blessing. They were troubled by the bishop's court that it was done in a house." P. Henry. Diary, Orig. MS.

Danford Hall, near Whitchurch, on the right hand side of the road leading thither from Wem, is another spot where Nonconformists often met. It was then inhabited by Mr. Yates ; and Philip Henry, Matth. Henry, Dr. Benion, Mr. Taylor of Wem, Mr. Lawrence of Nantwich, and other excellent men, periodically lectured in it.

Note O, p. 128.

See Dr. Watts's Psalms, the 119th, Parts 4, 5, and 8; his Hymns, the 119th, 2nd Book. See also a striking poem, called "The Great Word," by one of the ejected, preserved in the Congregational Magazine for January, 1838.

Mr. Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments is a standing memorial of this "love," and its exercise. The life of his venerated father shows its origin, in the taste for the Scriptures so early, and constantly infused by his own instructions and example. Not only did Mr. Philip Henry daily expound them in his family, but each child wrote a commentary fully; and I lately discovered in Mrs. Savage's Diary, for Thursday, Nov. 20, 1690, that her "dear father" had begun an Exposition of the Bible, which he intended to print. "I have," she adds, "earnestly begged the Divine presence for him in that work, that it may come to perfection and do good."—*Orig. MS.*

Note P, p. 129.

The attention paid by the Puritans to the Lord's-day was proverbial. One of their members—Dr. Bound—a Cantabrigian, of deserved celebrity, set forth, at some length, what he apprehended to be God's will in reference to the "Sabbath;" and though his book has been eclipsed by other writers, it was, as a whole, notwithstanding defects, a very forcible production, and made a great impression. It is now, however, chiefly remarkable for the opposition it occasioned. Indeed the hierarchy deported itself towards it with excessive bitterness; a thing the more strange, because, in the public service of the Church of England, not only is the fourth commandment applied to the Christian Sabbath, but repeated every week with

special solemnity as a LAW, to which the people respond, praying that their hearts may be inclined to keep it. Nor was that all. The suppression of the volume was attempted by prohibitions from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chief Justice; and its influence was counteracted, as far as possible, by publications of the "Declaration for Sports" on the holy day itself. Against the latter desecrating expedient the Puritans were most firmly set; and, besides showing a practical regard in their own conduct to the spirit of the enactment as set forth in the Decalogue, they either maintained the general correctness of Dr. Bound's views, or exposed the profaneness of his adversaries, or gave prominence to the neglected duty of Sabbath sanctification.

Their successors, the Nonconformists, were not a whit behind them, either in their "observation" of the day, or their zeal respecting it. You may see this in all their "Lives;" but in none more impressively than in that of good Philip Henry. He called and counted the Lord's day the Queen of days, the Pearl of the week; and he taught his children to do the same, to behold in it a *sign*; the institution a sign of God's love to us; the sanctification a sign of our love to him.—Life of the Rev. Philip Henry, ch. iv. p. 80, *ut supra*.

"To love God as our God," writes his excellent son, "is to love his word as our guide, *his day as our delight*, and his people as our brethren."—Rev. Matth. Henry. The Orig. MS.

"O!" says the same good man, "bid the Sabbath welcome. It was *made for man*, that he may receive good from his Creator in works of necessity, and do good to his fellow-creatures in works of mercy. It will refine us, raise us, purify us, fit us for heaven.

Keep it to *sanctify* it. The observation of a day holy to God every week is not abrogated by the death of Christ; for it was not merely an institution of the Mosaic economy, but was long before. We find the institution of it in innocency, Gen. ii. 2, 3; and we have reason to think it was observed by the

patriarchs before Moses. Gen. iv. 3; Job i. 6; Job ii. 1; and see Exod. xvi. 22, 28. It was the *Jewish Sabbath*, a mere ceremonial rest, that Christ superseded, Col. ii. 16; perhaps that passage refers to the day of atonement, which is called a sabbath. Lev. xxiii. 32.

Then we sanctify the Sabbath when we compose ourselves into a frame of spirit agreeable to it; when we are sanctified to God on that day. We must spend it in religious exercises. *That* is keeping it holy.

1. In solemn assemblies. For these, in a special manner, the Sabbath is intended. In *these* it is to be sanctified. We must duly attend on them both parts of the day. If unavoidably detained, our hearts must be there. That is the proper place. Christ went to the synagogue on the Sabbath-day. On that day the disciples came together.

2. In our families. It is the sabbath of the Lord in our *dwellings*. Lev. xxiii. 3. More time must be spent than on other days in family worship, in reading the Scriptures, in repeating sermons, in catechising,* in prayer, in singing of psalms, and in reading good books.

3. In our closets. More time must be spent in secret worship, in meditation and prayer. John was *alone* when he was 'in the spirit.'

* For this once diligently-performed good work what substitute ever has, or ever can be found? Where is the minister whose experience does not confirm such statements as the following?

"Those that have been catechised easily receive further instructions. When men have been well taught they understand our language."—Rev. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

"When we speak things very plain, there are those that do not apprehend. We are barbarians to them for want of being catechised."—*Ibid.*

See how necessary it is that we *rest* from all other employments and recreations on the Sabbath-day. We cannot otherwise do the *work*, as it should be done. Our Lord Jesus laid the stress of the Christian Sabbath more upon the work than the rest—in sending the Spirit on the first day of the week; and appointing his disciples to meet him on that day; so that *now* the Sabbath rest is chiefly in order to the Sabbath work.”—Rev. Matth. Henry. Orig. MSS.

“I remember,” says the same illustrious man, in his “Short Account” of “that great Scholar and Christian,” Mr. Tallents, who was ejected from St. Mary’s at Shrewsbury—“with what affection he would bless God with his family on a Lord’s-day morning, that on that day we were to lay aside our studies and our books, and *give ourselves* to communion with God in holy joy and praise.”—p. 55. 8vo. 1709.

The truth is that the Nonconformists generally, as the Puritans had done before them, considered the first day of the week to be *God’s own day*; and, therefore, to be wholly “employed about the things of God, thoughts of God, discourses of God, and the service” of God. Such is the phraseology of that ejected worthy—Mr. Slater—in his “Earnest Call to Family Religion.” In that edifying volume, not only is it urged upon the “heads of families” to guard the day of the Lord against profanation; but it is remarked “that the continuance of religion in England, under God, very much depends upon a care of keeping the Sabbath.” The same writer adds, and not having seen the statement elsewhere, it shall be given in his own words: “Many years ago, when I was a young man, famous Mr. Newcomen, of Dedham, told me this passage. This question was put in conclave—What is the best way to reduce England to the see of Rome? To this every cardinal was to give his answer, beginning at the youngest. Many expedients were propounded. At length, an old fox stood up, and said,—Take away their Sabbaths; and that will effectually do it. This invention was hugged; this me-

dium resolved upon; and not long after came out the Book of Sports."—Slater's Earnest Call, pp. 232, 233. 8vo. 1694.

But it was the sacredness of the Lord's-day *only* which these good men advocated. For those "upstart things — ('to the weekly one which was *from the beginning*')—annual feasts," so writes Mr. Matthew Henry, in a MS. now before me, they had no affection, because they found no scriptural warrant for them. "In the New Testament we have no day made holy but the Sabbath, no time holy time. No, not the holy time of Lent. Men *may* make a good day; Esther ix. 19; but not a holy day. Days of humiliation and thanksgiving upon special occasions may be appointed, but those are not holy days. Whether it be in the power of the church to appoint yearly days, of which they may say—they are holy to the Lord thy God, in them thou shalt do no manner of work—I will not *dispute*," but "I WOULD NOT FOR A WORLD BE ONE OF THOSE THAT ASSUME AND EXERCISE SUCH A POWER, because I see no warrant in the New Testament for it. Yet, I would be far from censuring those that religiously observe such days, because of Rom. xiv. 5, 6. Paul left every man to his liberty—though he was an apostle—and we desire to be still so left."—Rev. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

In like manner they attached no *sacredness to places*; neither to cathedrals nor parochial edifices, any more than to their own humbler buildings; though the latter certainly may be as fitly called *churches* as the former.—See Letter II. former series.

"We must learn," said the judicious Perkins, see ante, Note E, "to renounce that ignorant opinion of the world, who judge every material church to be the temple of God, and as holy as the church in Jerusalem was. The distinction of place and place in regard to holiness, which was under the law, is taken away by Christ. The *house* is *now* as holy as the church. Churches indeed must be regarded and maintained not for holiness, but for *order* sake."—Works, vol. iii. p. 353, *ut supra*.

The principal subjects thus alluded to were treated by Dr. Watts in his "Discourses on the Holiness of Times, Places, and People under the Jewish and Christian Dispensations," with admirable candour, good sense, and scriptural piety.—Dr. Watts's Works, vol. ii. p. 501, 4to. 1810.

One other topic may be mentioned, because, like those which have preceded, eminently characteristic of Puritans and Non-conformists, and evidential in like manner, of their real goodness. I mean the constant, serious regard they paid to the third commandment—*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*. For although they viewed the precept as having special relation to "the profanation of God's name by irreverent worshipping of him," and the "worshipping of him in a right manner;" (Matth. Henry. Orig. MS. ;) they considered it as prohibitory, also, of the use of the sacred name, either in terms of "admiration" (as when upon any sudden accident or strange report, we break forth into such vain speeches as, Good Lord, &c.) or—"in rash petitions and imprecations."—See "A plaine and familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments, by John Dod, and Robert Cleaver," p. 96. 4to. 1632. 18th edit.

Quite irrespective of the question, whether the Lord's Prayer is to be treated as "a form," or "a directory," the Puritans and Nonconformists were careful to HALLOW the NAME of their Father in heaven—in speech as well as worship. They maintained, that the profanation of that "name is a sin that strikes immediately against God;" that "no sin can any other way be an injury to" him; "and that his glory is thus trampled upon, his honour laid in the dust, his justice defied, his majesty dishonoured."—Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

They remembered, too, the "general rule Christ gives us concerning our communication, Matt. v. 37; in common discourse," to "use a bare affirmation, or negation; yea or nay;" because "whatever is more cometh of the evil one—Satan—

cometh from an evil principle—slight thoughts of an oath, or an ill custom of lying.”—Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

Nor did they forget that *the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*. And see Mal. ii. 2; Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. “Then,” said Mr. Matthew Henry, “use the name of God”—I again quote from his handwriting—“with great reverence, with a solemn pause—to affect others.” It is observable that, in the “Four Discourses” he published against “Vice and Profaneness,” while one was directed against “Sabbath-breaking,” another manifests no less zeal against “profane speaking.” In the latter, indeed, he thus writes:—“Many who never curse and swear, yet allow themselves in the taking of God’s name in vain, and either know not, or consider not the evil of it, and the dishonour done (though not intended) to God by it. When you use those forms of speech which are properly expressive of a pious ejaculation, in a light and careless manner, and to any other purpose than their genuine and original signification, which appears by your way of speaking not to be intended, but something else, you profane that which is sacred, and alienate to a common use that which appears to have been dedicated to God, and has holiness to the Lord written on it. To say ‘O Lord,’ when you mean no more but ‘I am hurt;’ and ‘God knows,’ when you mean no more but ‘I do not know;’ and ‘God bless me,’ when you mean no more but ‘I am surprised;’ and ‘God help you,’ when you mean no more but ‘I pity you;’ or any the like, is certainly taking the name of the Lord your God in vain, and to no purpose, that is, to no good purpose.”—Rev. Matth. Henry’s Misc. Works, p. 511, oct. 1830. How solemn are his expostulations with such persons!

You will recollect Dr. Doddridge’s letter to Sir J. —, a magistrate, who, in conversation, used “dreadful expletives,” and who, as the Doctor reminded him, might be “required to punish the same thing in others.”—Doddridge’s Works, vol. v.

p. 533. oct. 1804. I will only add, that Mr. Matthew Henry, in the manuscript already cited, refers with satisfaction to "the law of the land being *against* cursing and swearing." He likewise asks—"Why should it not be put in execution? God will not hold" such transgressors "guiltless. Why should we? The nation is endangered by the sin. Jer. xxiii. 10. I can but wish," he says, "something were done to suppress it. *I remember the time* when laws against praying and preaching were executed with more vigour."—Rev. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

Note Q, p. 146.

Mrs. Savage, recording one of her Sabbaths, says:—"I had little life in secret communion till evening. Then my heart was a little enlarged, and I came off a gainer. I did, as God enabled me, wrestle for a blessing for myself, my dear yoke-fellow, and family, the parish, neighbourhood, nation, neighbour nations, all the race of mankind; especially the household of faith; such as are members with me in the *same body*. I love the very thoughts of them."—Diary. Orig. MS.

How instructively did Mrs. Savage's friend, the good and catholic-spirited Mr. Tallents, mentioned in the preceding note, describe that "same body!"

"Jesus Christ," is his well-weighed language, "hath built his church (or congregation of his people) on large and sure foundations: and all that will serve him must build on them.

"Three things are necessary to make one a true living member of his church—faith, love, and obedience.

"1. Faith; that is a true belief of the great truths revealed by Christ, and a coming unto him for life.

"2. Love; that is, an unfeigned affection to Jesus Christ, and his people, and ways; which always proceeds from a living faith.

" 3. Obedience ; or a hearty resigning ourselves to him, and obeying his commands with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.

" These three are linked together. Faith produceth love, and by it obedience ; and, therefore, is the main thing in our religion.

" If the truth of any of these, especially of faith, be wanting, the life of a church or Christian is wanting.

" So three things are contrary to these—heresy, schism, and wickedness—as being against faith, love, and obedience."—Rev. Francis Tallents. The Orig. MS.

Note R, p. 173.

It is a pleasing fact that the " allegorical interpretation " of Scripture has, for some time, been the subject of serious attention. The readers of the *British Quarterly Review*—No. III.—have been indulged with a noble article upon it ; one that deserves the notice of all allegorisers ; and of all those, too, who are prone to dishonour the inspired pages, by substituting sound for sense.

Note S, p. 175.

Mrs. Hannah More, who was fond of reading many of the old divines, including Puritans and Nonconformists, said that she found " nothing more good than the lean of their fat."—*Memoirs by W. Roberts, Esq.*, vol. iv. p. 250, 3rd edit.

The witness borne to the " writings of Dissenters," by the Rev. Thomas Scott, is even more valuable ; because it followed the " excessive " prejudice he once entertained against them ; a prejudice which, he candidly acknowledges members of the

Church of England imbibe with the first rudiments of their instruction, and are taught by their whole education to consider as meritorious. See the Force of Truth. Part ii. Scott's Works, vol. i. p. 79. oct. 1823.

Not only has such prejudice chained down men's minds to all the evils of a cherished enmity, but how often has it created a special hatred to those who have manifested a better and more enlightened spirit !

That excellent "beneficed minister of the Church of England," who wrote a "Plea for the Nonconformists," asserted, among other things, that they were "men of great parts, piety, and prudence, sound divines, good preachers, and writers."—p. 67, 4to. 1683. 3rd edit. He also wrote a second Plea for them; and a third; and a fourth. In the last he says significantly enough—"I do not repent that I have given my testimony to the servants of Christ, nor the faith and holiness professed and propagated by them, although some will make it *as dear to me as they can*."—Epistle to the Reader. 4to. 1683.

Those good men had another defender in a *lay* member of the established church. And as he was one of the best Christians, as well as one of the best writers of the seventeenth century, his indignant expostulation will, it is hoped, put a burning blush into some reviler's cheek, even if it does nothing more. "What *new* doctrine do they—Nonconformists—bring? What *error* do they propagate? What deadly poison is under *their* lips? Do they not steadily stick to the true pure doctrine of our church? And is not conformity in *doctrine* much more than conformity in *ceremonies*?"—A Discourse on Schism, by Edward Polhill, Esq., pp. 55, 56. duod. 1694.

See ante, p. 64. Note.

Note T, p. 176.

My esteemed friend, the Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany, New York, one of the most eloquent living preachers, in a discourse with which he lately favoured me, and which was pronounced July 30, 1844, before the Philomathesian Society in Middleburg College, America, says—"The man who would neglect the works of Chillingworth and Hooker, of Barrow and Stillingfleet, of Howe and Baxter, and a host of illustrious authors with whom these were contemporary, would surely be unjust towards himself, would be ungrateful to God in turning away from some of the brightest lights which Omnipotence has ever kindled."—p. 47.

The extract thus given will carry thought to at least such works as those of Bishops Jewel, Cowper, Hopkins, Reynolds, Hall, and Sanderson; Archbishop Usher, John Smith, Mr. Guthrie, W. Gurnall, and Robert Trail, as worthy to be remembered among the "illustrious authors" alluded to. Will it not go yet further back—to the writings of the "Reformers?" On those admirable, though, for a long while, neglected writers, the Rev. E. Bickersteth has an interesting chapter, in his "Christian Student," pp. 232—251. Such a chapter, indeed, as makes it much to be regretted that his humility prevented him entering into an extended review; and showing more fully than by side glances the influence of the age upon the productions of the Reformers; and of those productions upon subsequent times.

It was a token for good when Mr. Richmond published his "Fathers of the English Church." The Tract Society followed in the same track. And are not the Parker Society, the Calvin Society, and the movement of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, as to "Scottish Reformers and Divines," signs of the times too encouraging not to excite the gratitude of every pious Protestant heart? Nor is the Wycliffe Society less important; that society includes in its plan those

fathers of English Nonconformity especially, who laboured to extend the Reformation beyond the point it reached in the days of Elizabeth and James. Its two first volumes, the Tracts and Treatises of Wycliffe; and the Select Works of David Clarkson, have appeared.

Note U, p. 183.

“ Good people account faithful ministers the stars, the angels of the churches, and sit with delight under their shadow. But these ministers are despised by men of the world. Sometimes, because they never were at the University. Whereas this is no reason. I was myself there when religion was uppermost; but *now* they have shut our children out by impositions at the entrance, and then reproach us for not being there.”—Rev. Philip Henry. June 3, 1690. From Mrs. Savage’s MS.

Note V, p. 195.

“ It is a great support and comfort to the servants of God in all conditions to see their *times* in his hand. There are four great concerns expressly said to be in God’s hand—our hearts; our breath; our ways; our times.”—Rev. Philip Henry, from Rev. Matth. Henry’s MS.

Note W, p. 198.

“ Our rule is plain. Matt. xxii. 21,—That in *civil* things we must render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s; be observant

of the laws of our country; stand in awe of the justice of it; be faithful to the prince, and the public peace. No man's religion will justify him in despising dominion, disturbing the repose of kingdoms, or owning a foreign power and jurisdiction.—That in *sacred* things we must render to God the things that are God's. We must worship him according to his own institutions, and not vary from them, much less go contrary to them, in compliance with any human power or authority whatsoever."—Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

How well this subject was illustrated by the Nonconformists is no secret. Among those who marked it was the "beneficed minister of the church of England," referred to, Note S. See particularly his "Third Plea for the Nonconformists," p. 13. 4to. 1682.

I may be permitted to allude here to Note B, appended to the former series of "Letters," because there the *loyalty* of the Nonconformists was demonstrated. And in view of that note and the present, I would recommend the perusal of some "Remarks on the Connexion between Religion and the State, by W. Urwick, D.D." oct. 1845.

Note X, p. 199.

See Dr. Manton's Expos. on James, p. 497. 4to. 1657. 3rd edit.

"Learn the commands of *Christ*. Call him *Master*. Sit at his feet. We are to keep his institutions *pure* that they be not corrupted. The addition of what Christ has *not* appointed is as great an affront to him as the omission of what he *has* appointed—an impeachment of his wisdom. See Prov. xxx. 6,—"Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar,"—this will not admit of any encroachment on the prerogatives of Christ. *He* is the only *lawgiver*

in the church, and he has given us a *complete* rule.”—Rev. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

The magnanimous Thomas Bradbury, speaking of the kingdom of Christ and its spiritual nature, says—“Christ has not subjected this empire to any authority but his own. It is a scandal and a blemish to talk of a Gospel-church as by law established. An *authority* to make articles of faith a rule of worship, is what Christ never gave out of his own hands, in the least degree. Alas for that church that must have *more* than Gospel to make it stand, and looks upon an establishment by law as its main security!”—Cited by the Rev. Dr. J. Pye Smith, in his beautiful sermon on the death of Ebenezer Maitland, Esq., p. 29. oct. 1834.

The church and state theory as to the spiritual ends of governments has been vindicated by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, in his book on “The State in its Relations with the Church,” as fully, and perhaps as ably, as such a matter can be expected to be. But if ever there was a perfect refutation of any writer by sheer argument, by a thorough discovery of false principles, and by an exhibition of absurd consequences, it is to be found in an article entitled “Gladstone on Church and State,” in the Edinburgh Review: from the pen of the Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay. It is now reprinted in that gentleman’s “Critical and Historical Essays,” vol. ii. p. 430, &c.

The authority of Christ makes us *Protestants*. The authority of Christ makes us *Protestant Dissenters*. Dr. J. Pye Smith, in his Funeral Sermon for Ebenezer Maitland, Esq., *ut supra*, p. 30.

Note Y, p. 200.

“What God has not *commanded*, I think men have not power to institute in the service of religion. The Scripture is a suffi-

cient rule. Nothing more innocent than washing hands, yet when this was *imposed*, and religion placed in it, Christ justified his disciples in their refusal to comply with it. What God has forbidden, I am sure men have not power to command. This is adjudged in the case of the apostles when they were forbidden to preach, Acts iv. 19; v. 29. God's authority is superior to that of any man, and our obligation to him prior. His wrath is more dreadful; his favour more desirable."—Rev. Matth. Henry. Orig. MS.

Note Z, p. 201.

"The reason why the reformation of religion in most places of the Christian word is but patched, and as a cake half baked," is "because states and kingdoms mould" it "not according to the word of God, but according to state interest." Henry the Eighth "thrust out the pope's supremacy because it furthered his design of a second marriage" to do so; "but he continued much of the Popish religion."—See *The Monster of Sinful Self-seeking Anatomised*; a Sermon, preached at Paul's, 10 Dec. 1654, by Edm. Calamy, B.D., and Pastor of Aldermanbury, London, p. 29. 4to. 1655.

"The Reformation was *not* perfect. Nor, alas! is it yet perfect. They that did it professed they did what they could. If they were now alive they would witness against the present impositions. But *then* the 'wound' was given to the beast."—Rev. Philip Henry, Nov. 5, 1684; from the Rev. Matth. Henry's MS.

It is worthy of notice, however, that the separation of the *Puritans* was so hearty, entire, and thorough, that there is not a particle of Romanism either in their mode of worship, the orders of their clergy, their forms of prayer, or their views of the sacraments, to which a Romanist can appeal, or on which

he can build a hope.—See the *New Englander*, for July, 1845, p. 349, published at New Haven, America.

In that able periodical it is maintained, that “the episcopal church is the *only* denomination in which there is any tendency to Roman Catholic doctrines;” the only one “in which the *germ* of those doctrines exist;” or with which the Romanists have any sympathy, or from which they have any hope.”—pp. 348, 349.

Is no matter furnished here for grave thoughts, especially when you observe *whence* accessions to the church of Rome are made? They are not made from the ranks of Nonconformity.

Note AA, p. 202.

That venerable Congregationalist, the Rev. Thomas Jollie, identified *primitive* Christianity with *Puritanism*, and so commended it “to the very last.”—See the *Noncon. Mem.*: vol. ii. p. 350. oct. 1802. His eventful “*Life*” was written by the Rev. Mr. Slate, in “*Select Nonconformists’ Remains*,” pp. 193—213. oct. 1814. See ante, p. 34.

Note BB, p. 207,

Even the acceptance of the indulgence in 1687 (to which, whatever the motive was in granting it, Nonconformists were entitled) is still made, when it serves a purpose, a ground of accusation against such as embraced it, as if favourers of Popery. Whereas, it was avowedly the more welcome to those very individuals, because they believed the preaching of the “truth as it is in Jesus,”—which the indulgence allowed—to be the best of all antidotes *against* Popery.—See the *Life* of

P. Henry, pp. 170, 171, *ut supra*. And also a sermon preached at Crediton, in Devon, Nov. 5, 1714, by Josiah Eveleigh, entitled "The Dissenter's Joy in the Preservation of the Church of England," p. 15. oct.

Note CC, p. 216.

Good old Mr. Hervey, of Chester, most of whose congregation went, after his death, to Mr. Matthew Henry's, thus taught. "Let us take heed to our spirit. Beware of fierceness. 2 Tim. ii. 3; Gen. lxix. 7. Grace breeds gentleness. We need not fear them that fear God. Gen. xlii. 8. *They* are sheep, doves, little children, harmless, inoffensive. Religion makes men modest in their opinions; sweet in their conversation; ready to yield." Col. iii. 12, 13.—From Rev. Matth. Henry's MS.

The Rev. Edward Reyner, mentioned in the 10th of the former Letters, and who is described in the Nonconformists' Memorial as "a very humble, meek, quiet, and patient person," gave this as his observation in the close of his days—"I have ever found, that words spoken in meekness of wisdom, and not from an angry spirit, are most piercing to others, and most comfortable to myself."—Noncon. Mem., vol. ii. p. 426. oct. 1802.

The famous Puritan, "Master" John Dod, used to compare rebukes uttered in a passion to "scalding potions," which could not be taken. He advocated "soft words, and hard arguments."—Clark's Lives of Thirty-two English Divines, p. 175. fol. 1677.

Mr. Hervey's was no unmeaning counsel. And it deserves observation, not only how studiously the old Puritans and Nonconformists, as a body, watched over their spirits, but how they desired the suppression of wrangling disputes; how they

mourned that the "godly" were so often "taken up" with them; and how they sought to give a right tone to the tongues and pens, as well as the minds of men. This happy disposition may be seen in every part of their history. Baxter, going back to the time of his ordination—A.D. 1638—tells us, that the "Nonconformable" ministers in the country to which he then removed, "were men of so much holiness and peace, that they would scarce ever *talk* of the matters in difference—between Conformists and Nonconformists—but of holiness, and heaven, and repressing the overmuch heat of the laymen."—*Treatise of Episcopacy*, 4to. 1681; *History of its production*, &c.

What can exceed in loveliness the spirit of John Howe, when pointing out the "carnality of religious contention?" Or, when seeking to promote "union among Protestants?" Or, when writing on "charity in reference to other men's sins?" Or the sweetness which pervades the "works," to mention no others, of Doctors Preston and Sibbs, of Flavel and John Corbet; of Isaac Ambrose, John Bunyan, and Matthew Henry? How far removed from *their* temper were party violence, and bigotry! How full were they of moderation, peace, and love! Baxter, after long experience, seriously laments the *effect* controversies, "though necessary, and about precious truths," had upon himself. They discomposed his spirit; they wasted his zeal; and his love and delight in God too.—See the "Premonition" to his "Saints' Everlasting Rest." 4to. 1651. And Dr. Bates informs us, that the heavenly-minded man said to a friend—*I can as willingly be a martyr for LOVE as for any article of the Creed.*—*Fun*, Sermon. p. 120. duod. 1692.

Note DD, p. 219.

See the "History of Congregationalism," and a "View of

Congregationalism, its Principles and Doctrines," by the Rev. Geo. Punchard, of Andover, in America.

Another eloquent American writer, having noticed the Pilgrim Fathers as the founders of the best part of the United States, exclaims—"Well may we glory in the name of Puritan—it is a synonyme of all that is holy in piety, unbending in moral rectitude, patient in self-denial, illustrious in patriotism, precious in liberty and truth."—Lectures on Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, by the Rev. Geo. B. Cheever, now D.D., p. 131. New York, 1844.

You may see the story of the Pilgrim Fathers better told, more spiritedly and more eloquently than ever before, in the first number of the British Quarterly Review.

And their "Chronicles," by Alexander Young. oct. Boston, 1841, is a volume of intense interest.

Nor is the "Dedham Pulpit," a book printed at Boston, in 1840, and communicated to me by my excellent friend the Rev. Dr. Jenks, of that city, either less edifying, or less honourable to the "New England" Fathers.

Note EE, p. 220.

Mrs. Hannah More, when extolling this talented lady, fell into a mistake respecting her, which it may not be amiss to correct.

She says that Lady Armyne, "on hearing of the fatal massacre of St. Bartholomew, instantly devoted a large sum for those exiled and destitute clergymen who had fled hither for protection."—Works, vol. xix. p. 72; Moral Sketches, "English Opinion of French Society."

That Lady Armyne's benevolence was great and constant, is certain, and it extended to the efforts before alluded to,—ante,

Letter xix.—for the conversion of the Indians in New England ; but it is equally certain that her ladyship was not born when the massacre of the Protestants, to which Mrs. More refers, took place ; a massacre, and it deserves observation, which the Romanists, not content with the thanksgivings and doings of the pope and his cardinals *at the time*, celebrated in 1839, by recasting a medal in its commemoration.

But when, on Bartholomew day, 1662, more than two thousand of the best ministers the Church of England ever had, and whose *goodness* I have been showing, were ejected from her pulpits by the Act of Uniformity, Lady Armyne *was* alive ; and exercising the graces of a vigorous piety. Out of pure sympathy with those “godly, able, and painful ministers,” she gave Mr. Calamy, one of their number, five hundred pounds to be distributed among the most indigent and necessitous of their families. See *Lives of sundry Eminent Persons*, by Samuel Clark, p. 144. fol. 1683.

Note FF, p. 231.

How feelingly did Dr. Jacomb, on his ejection by the Act of Uniformity, in 1662, expostulate against this evil disposition !

“It is not this thing, or that thing, that puts us upon this dissent ; but it is *conscience* towards God, and fear of offending *him*. Do not add affliction to affliction. Be not *uncharitable* in judging of us, as if through pride, faction, obstinacy, or devotedness to a party, or which is worse than all, in opposition to authority, we do dissent. The Judge of all hearts *KNOWS it is not so*. But it is merely from those apprehensions which, after prayer and the use of all means, do yet continue, that doing thus and thus we should displease God.”—*A complete Collection of Farewell Sermons*, p. 115. 4to. 1663.

You may refer also to pages 143, 189, 298, 446, 469, and 514, of the same volume, in proof of the same fact.

And—what was true then is true also now.—See Dr. J. Pye Smith's Funeral Sermon for Ebenezer Maitland, Esq., pp. 28, 29, *ut supra*.

Note GG, p. 231.

To whatever varieties of judgment the "Alliance" proposed for formation by the Conference held at Liverpool, in October last, may give rise; or whatever obstacles may occur to pious and far-seeing minds, in regard to its embryo state, Protestant character, or probable working, is there nothing to cheer, to prompt to praise, in that the union contemplated is one of *individuals*—not of churches, ministers, or denominations?—a union involving neither compromise, nor sanction, as to points in which good men may differ; and acknowledging its adherents merely as "Evangelical Christians." "BROTHERLY love is the great law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family."—*Rev. Matth. Henry*. The Orig. MS.

The Roman church boasts of unity; but what is it, after all, other than a coerced agreement—an "extensive uniformity"—professed subjection to one temporal head, the pope? Do not the orders, societies, and sects of the Papacy, utterly regardless of the TRUTH of God, embrace all sorts of persons, and every shade of opinion? Uniformity may be a characteristic of such a combination; but how can Christian union be so? The confederacy is rather, as Dr. Owen has shown, utterly inconsistent with, and destructive of *that*.—Works, vol. xxi. p. 67, &c. See also, Dr. J. Pye Smith's Discourse on the Reasons of the Protestant Religion, p. 15, &c. oct. 1815. See too, "Brief Thoughts on the Church and Church Principles, by the Rev.

Mourant Brock, M.A., Chaplain to the Bath Penitentiary," particularly pp. 7—15, on "Unity and Uniformity," 2nd edit. 1846. The whole tract is deserving of especial notice.

Protestants, notwithstanding they mostly believe in one "holy catholic church," "one Lord, one faith," and "one baptism," have, no doubt, many diversities. But what then? Those diversities belong to Protestantism as a system of liberty, religious as well as civil; and are, so far, its honour. And, although some affect the reproach of the system on account of the diversities, is it doubtful that their censures commonly spring from another cause—vexation that their idol *uniformity*, the strength of priestcraft, is not worshipped? How seldom is grief felt because those who belong to the system behave towards each other unworthily; though, in fact, *that* is the evil, and ought to be the ground of sorrow. "It is not," said the excellent Philip Henry, "so much our difference of opinion that doth us the mischief (for we may as soon expect all the clocks in the town to strike together as to see all good people of a mind in everything on this side heaven;) but the *mismanagement* of that difference."—*Life*, p. 54, *ut supra*.

Not only are diversities incident to the exercise of man's most sacred rights, and *will* arise as freedom and conscience are unshackled, but they give occasion for the discharge of many duties prescribed in the inspired word. Nor can any authority, or "commandments of men," or doctrines of caste, dispense with the performance of those duties, any more than they can dispense with the "new" command, John xiii. 34, 35; a command which binds all Christ's disciples *now*, as much as when it was first given.

It is obvious, therefore, that the thing wanted, and to be sought, is not uniformity, but Christian recognition—of Christians as Christians—and likewise Christian conduct; the due exercise among "believers" of forbearance, meekness, and

love; the *manifestation* of scriptural catholicity, Ephes. vi. 24; of that Gospel union which—though, to the dishonour of Protestant Christendom, sadly obscured and hindered—in the case of all real Christians actually exists. And is not an *agreement* to this end, a token for good? A movement in the right direction? A step, at least, towards the exhibition upon earth of the oneness and harmony which distinguish the church triumphant in heaven? “True love to our brother whom we have seen, will be the *fulfilling of the law*, and an excellent principle of obedience. See James ii. 8. He that is called our neighbour in the Old Testament, is called our brother in the new; because in Christ the relation is nearer than among the Jews, and the obligation to love stronger. Love as *brethren*. 1 Pet. iii. 8. Love the *brotherhood*. 1 Pet. ii. 17; ALL; and AS SUCH; as the household of faith—the one great family of which Christ is the head.”—*Rev. Matth. Henry*. The Orig. MS.

THE END.

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CORRIGENDA.

Page 48, line 19, for Long, *read* Tong.

— 48, — 27, for Hieron, *read* Hurriion.

— 97, — 21, *dele* little.

— 195, — 11, for opposite, *read* opposites.

— ~~197,~~ 21, *dele* as.

